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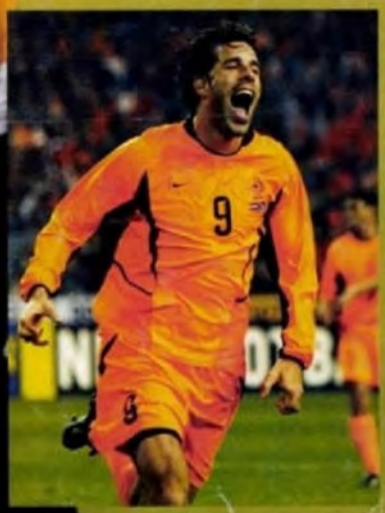
'Why I snubbed Chelsea'

Christoph Daum
Sex, drugs and Fenerbahce

Monaco
Paupers to princes

Van Nistelrooy
Back on track with Holland

NEDVED
World Player of the Year
Czech grabs the glory in our annual poll



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JANUARY 2004 VOL.44 NO.4
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Annual subscription is for 12 months
(13 issues, prices include postage) UK: £36.40
Europe/Eire (inc. VAT): 77.76euros (airmail)
USA: $89.65 (airmail)
Rest of world: £63 (airmail)

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JANUARY 2004

WORLD SOCCER comment

CONGRATULATIONS to Pavel Nedved, *World Soccer*'s World Player of the Year for 2003. Congratulations, too, to *World Soccer* readers – it's always difficult choosing the outstanding player of the past 12 months in a non-tournament year. But Nedved can be considered the intelligent choice. His selection is proof, once again, that you are among the most knowledgeable people in football.

We're rightly proud of our awards – they're the oldest of their kind and are now in their 22nd year. Nedved joins an illustrious list of former winners that includes Michel Platini, Diego Maradona and Marco Van Basten. Amazingly, none of the top four in this year's *World Soccer* award – Nedved, Ruud Van Nistelrooy, Raul and Paolo Maldini – featured on the shortlist for FIFA's player award. But then FIFA's award is decided by the world's national coaches – and they have a habit of missing the target.

In 2001, Luis Figo, who was seventh in *World Soccer*'s vote that year, was their surprise choice. He won FIFA's gong thanks to votes from such footballing hotbeds as Barbados, Cape Verde Islands, Mozambique and Kazakhstan. Not forgetting Tonga, Cuba and Myanmar.

Coaches from these countries have neither the money nor the inclination to travel extensively to games in Europe and South America. So they rely on TV highlights packages of the Premiership and La Liga for their footballing information. No wonder that, year after year, they demonstrate their weakness for big personalities over footballing achievement.

FIFA's award is fast becoming football's answer to Miss World, an award where column inches and endorsements matter more than talent and ability. It begs the question whether individual awards should even be handed out; football is a team sport, after all.

But as long as *World Soccer* readers keep hitting the target with intelligent choices, we'll keep publishing the results.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor (gavin_hamilton@ipcmedia.com)

*** SAVE MONEY ON WORLD SOCCER SEE OUR SPECIAL SUBSCRIPTION OFFER ON PAGE 70

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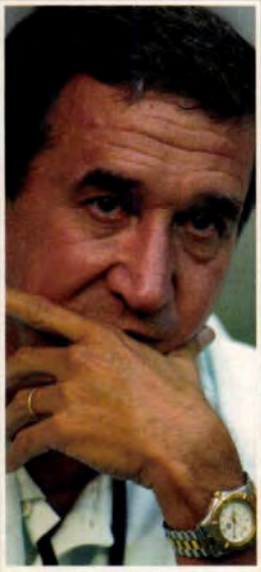


Carlos Alberto Parreira, p32

MATURANA QUITS

COLOMBIA: Francisco Maturana resigned as national coach following a defeat by Venezuela in the South American World Cup qualifiers. Brazil and Argentina also dropped points. **Page 68**

San Jose take title

UNITED STATES: San Jose Earthquakes won the 2003 MLS championship after a 4-2 victory over Chicago Fire in the Final. **Page 26**

Boca back on top

ARGENTINA: Boca Juniors won the opening championship with two games to go after beating Arsenal 2-1, while closest rivals San Lorenzo lost. **Page 66**

Nedved on top of the world

Pavel Nedved of Juventus and the Czech Republic is *World Soccer*'s World Player of the Year, taking more than a third of the votes in our annual poll. Carlo Ancelotti is Manager of the Year, and Milan are Team of the Year. **Page 6**

Chelsea take control

ENGLAND: Chelsea have confounded the critics by leading the way in the Champions League and the Premiership. **Page 57**

Latvia stun Europe

Latvia sprang the surprise of the Euro 2004 qualifiers when they beat Turkey 3-2 on aggregate to reach the finals in Portugal. The other play-offs went to form, with Holland, Croatia, Spain and Russia beating Scotland, Slovenia, Norway and Wales respectively. *World Service, starting* **page 83**

Dortmund crash out

GERMANY: Borussia Dortmund were the biggest casualties of the UEFA Cup second round, losing to French side Sochaux. Feyenoord, beaten by Teplice of the Czech Republic, and Schalke, who lost to Brondby, were the other high-profile fallers. *World Service, starting* **page 83**

THAIS SCRAPE THROUGH

THAILAND: The national team lost their first three Asian Cup qualifiers but reached next year's finals after beating Uzbekistan in their last match. **Page 72**

Inter bounce back

ITALY: Internazionale responded to a 5-1 thrashing by Arsenal in the Champions League by beating Juventus in Turin, reviving their season and opening up the Italian League title race. **Page 20**

EURO 2004 DRAW

PORTUGAL: France and England will meet in Group B, those other old rivals Holland and Germany in Group D and neighbours Portugal and Spain in Group A. The hosts kick off the finals on June 12, playing Greece in Oporto. **Page 8**

New reign for Raja

MOROCCO: Raja Casablanca made up for the disappointment of losing last year's African Champions League Final when they beat Cotonsport of Cameroon to win the 2003 CAF Cup Final. **Page 74**

Nedved on top!

Czech heads this year's roll of honour

Nedved
World Player of the Year

Ancelotti
World Manager of the Year

Milan
World Team of the Year

PAVEL NEDVED'S performances for Juventus and the Czech Republic have earned him this year's accolade as the world's best player. He gained more than a third of the votes from *World Soccer* readers in our 22nd annual poll.

The 31-year-old was the outstanding player for Juventus as they retained the Italian League title and reached the Champions League Final. Nedved missed that game through suspension after being booked in the semi-final, when his spectacular performance was a major factor in the defeat of competition favourites Real Madrid. Juventus lost the Final on penalties to Milan, winners of our Team of the Year award and coached by Carlo Ancelotti, our 2003 World Manager of the Year.

Nedved saw off some strong competition for the player award. Ruud Van Nistelrooy's goalscoring exploits for Manchester United and Holland won enough votes to secure second place, ahead of Raul, the consistently brilliant Real Madrid forward. Paolo Maldini, winner of the award in 1994, came fourth – a recognition of his achievement in winning a fourth European Cup with Milan.

Thierry Henry, France's best player when they won the Confederations Cup in the summer, finished fifth, ahead of last year's winner, Ronaldo, in sixth place.

Carlo Ancelotti took the manager award after guiding Milan to a sixth European Cup. He is the fourth Italian to win the prize, following Enzo Bearzot (1982), Arrigo Sacchi (1989) and Dino Zoff (2000). Marcello Lippi of Juventus, Ancelotti's opposing number in the Champions League Final, finished second, ahead of Jose Mourinho, coach of UEFA Cup winners FC Porto.

Manchester United's Alex Ferguson, winner of the award in 1999, was fourth, beating Martin O'Neill of Celtic into fifth place. Carlos Bianchi, boss of Libertadores Cup winners Boca Juniors, was next, followed by Real Sociedad's French coach Raynald Denoueix.

Voting in the World Team of the Year category followed a similar pattern, with Milan holding off Juventus for a double celebration. Real Madrid's popularity is reflected in their third-place finish, but there is also recognition for FC Porto and Real Sociedad.

The Czech Republic were the highest-placed international side, in sixth place, ahead of France.

WORLD SOCCER AWARDS 2003

HOW YOU VOTED

WORLD PLAYER OF THE YEAR

		% OF VOTES
1	Pavel Nedved (Juventus & Czech Republic)	35.9
2	Ruud Van Nistelrooy (Manchester United & Holland)	9.5
3	Raul (Real Madrid & Spain)	9.1
4	Paolo Maldini (Milan)	8.2
5	Thierry Henry (Arsenal & France)	6.1
6	Ronaldo (Real Madrid & Brazil)	4.3
7	Roy Makaay (Deportivo La Coruna/Bayern Munich & Holland)	4.0
8	Andrii Shevchenko (Milan & Ukraine)	2.8
9	Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid & Brazil)	2.6
10	David Beckham (Man Utd/Real Madrid & England)	2.1
Others		15.4

PREVIOUS WINNERS	% OF VOTES
1982 Paolo Rossi (Juventus & Italy)	23
1983 Zico (Udinese & Brazil)	28
1984 Michel Platini (Juventus & France)	54
1985 Michel Platini (Juventus & France)	21
1986 Diego Maradona (Napoli & Argentina)	36
1987 Ruud Gullit (Milan & Holland)	39
1988 Marco Van Basten (Milan & Holland)	43
1989 Ruud Gullit (Milan & Holland)	24
1990 Lothar Matthaus (Internazionale & West Germany)	22
1991 Jean-Pierre Papin (Marseille & France)	25
1992 Marco Van Basten (Milan & Holland)	19
1993 Roberto Baggio (Juventus & Italy)	14
1994 Paolo Maldini (Milan & Italy)	27
1995 Gianluca Vialli (Juventus & Italy)	18
1996 Ronaldo (Barcelona & Brazil)	17
1997 Ronaldo (Barcelona/Internazionale & Brazil)	27
1998 Zinedine Zidane (Juventus & France)	23
1999 Rivaldo (Barcelona & Brazil)	42
2000 Luis Figo (Barcelona/Real Madrid & Portugal)	26
2001 Michael Owen (Liverpool & England)	31
2002 Ronaldo (Internazionale/Real Madrid & Brazil)	26

WORLD MANAGER OF THE YEAR

		% OF VOTES
1	Carlo Ancelotti (Milan)	19.6
2	Marcello Lippi (Juventus)	11.4
3	Jose Mourinho (FC Porto)	10.9
4	Alex Ferguson (Manchester United)	7.5
5	Martin O'Neill (Celtic)	6.0
6	Carlos Bianchi (Boca Juniors)	5.4
7	Raynald Denoueix (Real Sociedad)	4.1
8	Vicente Del Bosque (Real Madrid)	3.0
9	Jacques Santini (France)	2.8
10	Felix Magath (Stuttgart)	2.2
Others		27.1

	% OF VOTES
Enzo Bearzot (Italy)	49
Sepp Piontek (Denmark)	29
Michel Hidalgo (France)	30
Terry Venables (Barcelona)	30
Guy Thys (Belgium)	15
Johan Cruyff (Ajax)	25
Rinus Michels (Holland/Bayer Leverkusen)	48
Arrigo Sacchi (Milan)	42
Franz Beckenbauer (West Germany)	53
Michel Platini (France)	42
Richard Moller Nielsen (Denmark)	28
Alex Ferguson (Manchester United)	21
Carlos Alberto Parreira (Brazil)	17
Louis Van Gaal (Ajax)	42
Berti Vogts (Germany)	28
Ottmar Hitzfeld (Borussia Dortmund)	17
Arsene Wenger (Arsenal)	28
Alex Ferguson (Manchester United)	60
Dino Zoff (Italy)	18
Gerard Houllier (Liverpool)	28
Guus Hiddink (South Korea)	28

WORLD TEAM OF THE YEAR

		% OF VOTES
1	Milan	23.4
2	Juventus	13.8
3	Real Madrid	10.5
4	Boca Juniors	7.5
5	FC Porto	5.6
6	Czech Republic	5.2
7	France	4.9
8	Real Sociedad	3.9
9	Celtic	2.2
10	Stuttgart	1.7
Others		21.3

	% OF VOTES
Brazil	30
Hamburg	29
France	45
Everton	42
Argentina	15
FC Porto	38
Holland	43
Milan	51
West Germany	28
France	20
Denmark	37
Parma	24
Milan	33
Ajax	50
Nigeria	31
Borussia Dortmund	20
France	35
Manchester United	61
France	33
Liverpool	26
Brazil	24

WS WORLD SOCCER Euro 2004

Something for everyone

Keir Radnedge reports from Lisbon on the draw for the European Championship finals

Full house...the draw unfolds in Lisbon

RALPH ZLOCZOWER, veteran president of the Swiss federation, summed up the European Championship draw for just about everyone.

Zloczower, amiably enjoying the attention in the absence of national coach Kobi Kuhn, said: "It's good that the groups are comparatively even and there is something significant for everyone – even for countries like ours, which are not among the favourites. We knew we would be drawn with some better teams but that also gives us a chance of giving a good account of ourselves. Even, maybe, spring a surprise."

The only previous time the Swiss reached the finals they did just that, drawing 1-1 with England in the opening match in 1996. That was significant. The first game is even more important for the outsiders. A good start means confidence and momentum, a bad start means the flight home is already beckoning.

On that basis Group A sees Portugal at risk in their first match against Greece, even though the main fixture focus will be on the concluding Portugal v Spain duel in Sporting Lisbon's redeveloped Alvalade stadium. Spain, humiliated off the pitch by Portugal's trashing of their bid to gain hosting rights, will have even more at stake than usual.

Russia could have something to say in the group but that depends on finding a significant marksman or on Dmitri Sychev fulfilling his erratically-drawn potential.

Group B will see Zloczower's hopes rest on a winning start against Croatia, while holders France face England in the latest round of a match that has been going for almost a thousand years. The last time the nations met in a finals opener was in Bilbao at the 1982 World Cup when Bryan Robson struck after 27 seconds and England won 3-1. A repeat would be a surprise.

'Portugal are at risk in their opening match against Greece, even though the main focus will be on their duel with Spain'

Santini stays quiet

Both managers were politely circumspect. France boss Jacques Santini refused even to be drawn on which England players might concern him the most. "It's too far away to speculate on who may or may not be playing," he said, as if suspicious that Sven Goran Eriksson planned to leave David Beckham and Michael Owen at home.

Eriksson looked uncomfortable on the platform, as if fearing questions of a more pointed nature about his new contract offer from the FA.

Italy, in Group C, appear to have been handed the smoothest prospective passage to the quarter-finals via Denmark, Sweden (whom they beat 2-1 with a second string in a meaningless last group match in Euro 2000) and Bulgaria.

Group D is the toughest, with only Latvia leavening the rich mixture of the Czech Republic, Holland and Germany. The latter two's opening match was switched on security grounds from Aveiro to Oporto after the draw. England also benefited from a venue switch. It's a pity such common sense had not struck UEFA four years ago when England were drawn against Germany in Charleroi.

Whether the Portuguese security services can similarly pre-empt ticket touting or 'summer yob' hooliganism remains open to question.

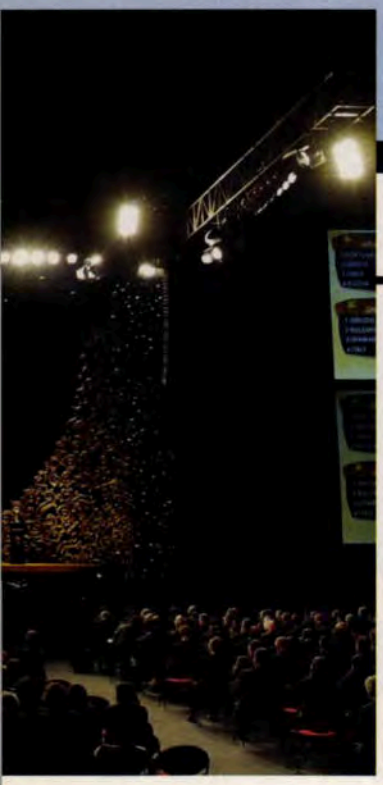
Latvia were the team everyone wanted in their group after their shock victory over Turkey in the play-offs. They won the first leg 1-0 in freezing Riga, but in Istanbul Turkey seized a 2-0 lead in 64 minutes on goals from Ilhan Mansiz and veteran Hakan Sukur.

Fatally, then, they relaxed. Two minutes later Latvia levelled overall and went crucially ahead on the away goal rule through Yury Laizans' swirling free-kick.

A silenced crowd saw Turkey throw men forward and saw Latvia exploit the gaps. Twelve minutes remained when a long ball over the top sent Maris Verpakovskis clear to hold off Bulent Korkmaz and score No 2. Turkey were out and Latvia, remarkably, were through.

Holland approached their duel with Scotland squabbling like schoolboys and were caned 1-0 at Hampden. But James McFadden's stylish goal proved inadequate when the Dutch handed out a 6-0 lesson back in Amsterdam.

A second British disappointment was Wales' defeat by Russia. Mark Hughes managed an effective containment operation in Moscow but all the effort went to waste when Vadim Evseev broke away for the tie's only goal after 22 minutes back in Cardiff.



Spain returned to the finals with surprising ease. They scrambled a 2-1 home win in Valencia. But in Oslo Raul struck on 34 minutes and Juan Carlos Valeron inspired second-half goals for Vicente and Joseba Etxeberria.

Prso the key

As for Croatia, they relied on Monaco striker Dado Prso to edge past Balkan neighbours Slovenia. Prso grabbed Croatia's goal in the opening 1-1 draw in Zagreb. He then struck the only goal in the return.

Croatia manager Otto Baric was one of the most relaxed of all the managers at the draw, even suggesting mischievously that "already I have seen some weaknesses in our French opponents".

But the prize for keeping one's feet on the ground belonged to Denmark's Morten Olsen. While his fellow bosses duly vanished among their assorted self-important minders, agents and officials, Olsen was to be found hours later sitting quietly alone in the main concourse of Lisbon airport.

After half an hour reading his newspaper, Olsen's flight was called and off he strode for the gate. Olsen does not rule out another Danish surprise to match 1992. In that case, he can forget such anonymity.

The Draw

GROUP A
Portugal
Spain
Greece
Russia

Saturday, June 12
Portugal v Greece (Oporto, 17:00)
Spain v Russia (Faro-Loule, 19:45)

Wednesday, June 16
Greece v Spain (Oporto, 17:00)
Russia v Portugal (Lisbon, 19:45)

Sunday, June 20
Spain v Portugal (Lisbon, 19:45)
Russia v Greece (Faro-Loule, 19:45)

GROUP B
France
England
Switzerland
Croatia

Sunday, June 13
Switzerland v Croatia (Leiria, 17:00)
France v England (Lisbon, 19:45)

Thursday, June 17
England v Switzerland (Coimbra, 17:00)
Croatia v France (Leiria, 19:45)

Monday, June 21
Croatia v England (Lisbon, 19:45)
Switzerland v France (Coimbra, 19:45)

GROUP C
Sweden
Denmark
Italy
Bulgaria

Monday, June 14
Denmark v Italy (Guimaraes, 17:00)
Sweden v Bulgaria (Lisbon, 19:45)

Friday, June 18
Bulgaria v Denmark (Braga, 17:00)
Italy v Sweden (Oporto, 19:45)

Tuesday, June 22
Italy v Bulgaria (Guimaraes, 19:45)
Denmark v Sweden (Oporto, 19:45)

GROUP D
Czech Republic
Latvia
Germany
Holland

Tuesday, June 15
Czech Rep v Latvia (Aveiro, 17:00)
Germany v Holland (Oporto, 19:45)

Saturday, June 19
Latvia v Germany (Oporto, 17:00)
Holland v Czech Rep (Aveiro, 19:45)

Wednesday, June 23
Holland v Latvia (Braga, 19:45)
Germany v Czech Rep (Lisbon, 19:45)

QUARTER-FINALS
Thursday, June 24
(Match 25) Winner-Group A v Runners-up-Group B (Lisbon, 19:45)

Friday, June 25
(Match 26) Winner-Group B v Runners-up-Group A (Lisbon, 19:45)

Saturday, June 26
(Match 27) Winner-Group C v Runners-up-Group D (Faro-Loule, 19:45)

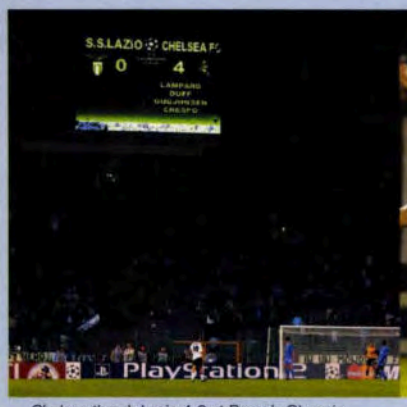
Sunday, June 27
(Match 28) Winner-Group D v Runners-up-Group C (Oporto, 19:45)

SEMI-FINALS
Wednesday, June 30
Winner-Match 25 v Winner-Match 27 (Lisbon, 19:45)

Thursday, July 1
Winner-Match 26 v Winner-Match 28 (Oporto, 19:45)

FINAL
Sunday, July 4
(Lisbon, 19:45)

All times are local



Chelsea thrash Lazio 4-0 at Rome's Olympic stadium on Champions League matchday four

04/11/03

Stuttgart end Panathinaikos's chances of making the Champions League last 16 with a 3-1 win in Athens

04/11/03

Olympiakos beat Galatasaray 3-0 in Champions League Group D

05/11/03

Juventus reach the knockout stages of the Champions League after a goalless draw with Real Sociedad

05/11/03

WS WORLD SOCCER Good month... bad month...

Good and bad...Latvia get to Euro 2004 – then draw Holland, Germany and the Czechs

good...

LATVIA After surprisingly reaching the play-offs, they qualified for their first major finals with a stunning 3-2 aggregate win over Turkey.

DADO PRSO The man of the moment with a four-goal haul for Monaco in one Champions League match, followed by two more for Croatia in the Euro 2004 play-offs against Slovenia.

ANTONIO CASSANO Roma's young starlet made his full senior debut for the Italian national side.

MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER On a high after an exciting climax to the season and the signing of teenage wonderkid Freddy Adu.

CLAUDIO RANIERI The Tinkerman fights back. Chelsea's manager had the last laugh when his team qualified for the Champions League knockout stages, then beat Manchester United to go top of the Premiership.

bad...

NELSON ACOSTA Bolivia's national coach got his excuses in early ahead of a 3-0 defeat by Argentina – he had his laptop stolen and lost all his tactical plans.

CARLOS TEVEZ Political pawn in the game between FIFA, the Argentinian FA and his club, Boca Juniors. Missed the Under-20 World Youth Cup, but was cleared to play in the World Club Cup in Yokohama.

PAUL BARBER Sacked as the English FA's 'director of marketing and communications' and the major casualty of Mark Palios's new reign as FA chief executive.

LATVIA Drawn against Germany, Holland and the Czech Republic in Euro 2004's toughest group.

Newcastle beat Basle 3-2 in the UEFA Cup second round, first leg

06/11/03

Slavia Prague and Levski Sofia draw 2-2 in Prague in the UEFA Cup second round

06/11/03

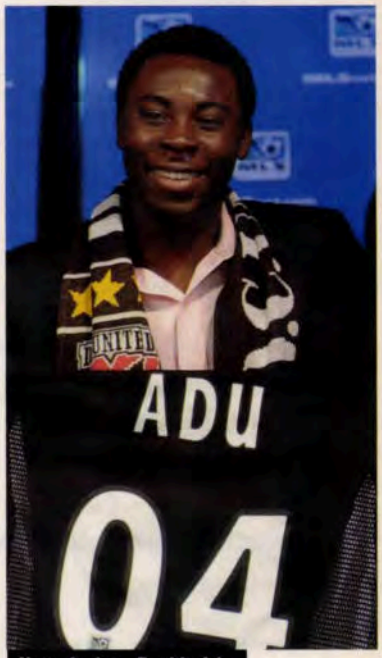
Roma beat Lazio 2-0 in the first Rome derby of the Serie A season

09/11/03

Notes & quotes

"I'm the spare tyre. Whether I'm good or not, I'll be the number two in January."
Marseille's Croat keeper Vedran Runje reacts with resignation to the imminent arrival at the club of Fabien Barthez.

"Our home is Camp Nou, yours is a tomb."
Death threats are daubed on the front door of Barcelona president Joan Laporta after he takes steps to outlaw controversial supporter group Boixos Nois.



New signing...Freddy Adu

"He is going to change soccer in this country...what Michael Jordan was in basketball, Freddy's going to be in soccer."
US federation staff coach Juan Carlos Michia on the Freddy Adu phenomenon.

"Now I'll be called grandad for the right reasons."
Former Deportivo midfielder Donato, aged 41, announcing his retirement and plans to spend more time with his first grandchild.

TEAM OF THE MONTH – NOVEMBER 2003

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HOW THEY VOTED

A BOLA (POR)
Hildebrand (Stuttgart); Cafu (Milan), Gallas (Chelsea), Samuel (Roma), Carboni (Valencia); Pires (Arsenal), Beckham (Real Madrid), Duff (Chelsea); Kuranyi (Stuttgart), Henry (Arsenal), Shevchenko (Milan)

DON BALON (SPA)
Pelizzoli (Roma); Hinkel (Stuttgart), Ricardo Carvalho (FC Porto), Evra (Monaco); Beckham (Real Madrid), Lampard (Chelsea), Ernst (Werder Bremen), Sneijder (Ajax); Prso (Monaco), Shevchenko (Milan), Ronaldo (Real Madrid)

FANATIK (TUR)
Pelizzoli (Roma); Hinkel (Stuttgart), Terry (Chelsea), Mancini (Roma); Beckham (Real Madrid), Giunti (Besiktas), Nedved (Juventus), Giuly (Monaco), Van der Vaart (Ajax); Prso (Monaco), Henry (Arsenal)

FOOT (BLG)
Pelizzoli (Roma); Boumsong (Auxerre), Soldo (Stuttgart), Bridge (Chelsea); Beckham (Real Madrid), Sneijder (Ajax), Giuly (Monaco), Lampard (Chelsea); Prso (Monaco), Shevchenko (Milan), Henry (Arsenal)

GAZZETTA DELLO SPORT (ITA)
Cech (Rennes); Johnson (Chelsea), Stam (Lazio), Maldini (Milan), Evra (Monaco); Sneijder (Ajax), Pirlo (Milan), Makelele (Chelsea), Reyes (Sevilla); Henry (Arsenal), Shevchenko (Milan)

KICKER (GER)
Pelizzoli (Roma); J Zanetti (Internazionale), Samuel (Roma), Terry (Chelsea); Giuly (Monaco), Makelele (Chelsea), Totti (Roma), Zidane (Real Madrid); Van Nistelrooy (Manchester United), Prso (Monaco), Henry (Arsenal)

SPORT EXPRESS (RUS)
Cudicini (Chelsea); Hinkel (Stuttgart), Fernando Meira (Stuttgart), Bridge (Chelsea); Hleb (Stuttgart), Pirlo (Milan), Lampard (Chelsea), Micoud (Werder Bremen); Henry (Arsenal), Shevchenko (Milan), Prso (Monaco)

TIPS-BLADET (DEN)
Cudicini (Chelsea); Puyol (Barcelona), Ferdinand (Manchester United), Samuel (Roma); Sneijder (Ajax), Ernst (Werder Bremen), Makelele (Chelsea), Reyes (Sevilla); Henry (Arsenal), Prso (Monaco), Shevchenko (Milan)

VOETBAL INTL (HOL)
Pelizzoli (Roma); Ricardo Carvalho (FC Porto), Samuel (Roma), Kompany (Anderlecht); Mancini (Roma), Beckham (Real Madrid), Sneijder (Ajax), Nedved (Juventus); Shevchenko (Milan), Henry (Arsenal), Reyes (Sevilla)

WORLD SOCCER (UK)
Casillas (Real Madrid); Jorge Andrade (Deportivo La Coruna), Nesta (Milan), Hinkel (Stuttgart); Emerson (Roma), Nedved (Juventus), Valdo (Osasuna), Lampard (Chelsea); Verpakovskis (Skonto Riga), Prso (Monaco), Henry (Arsenal)

Fans pay tribute to the late Marc-Vivien Foe at a memorial charity match in Lyon

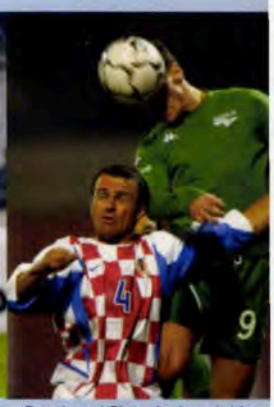
11/11/03

Manchester United announce that they will tour the United States again next summer

11/11/03

An Iran-North Korea Asian Cup qualifier is abandoned when the Koreans protest after a firecracker is thrown from the crowd

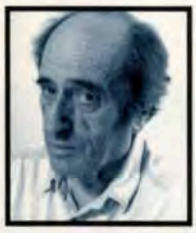
12/11/03



Croatia and Slovenia draw 1-1 in their Euro 2004 play-off first leg

15/11/03

WS WORLD SOCCER Brian Glanville



...on the need to ban England fans from Portugal...the Vadas affair reverberations...Wales' sad Euro exit...the England suspensions fiasco

GERHARD AIGNER, the UEFA chief executive, has given due warning. If there is misbehaviour by England 'fans' at the Euro 2004 finals in Portugal, the team will be sent home.

Since there is no hope of anything but hooligan violence by the usual suspects, the so-called minority of England supporters, the Football Association should start thinking about it now and impose a ban similar to the one put in place for the game against Turkey in Istanbul in October.

Such louts, as we know too well from the past, are not amenable to reason. It is always sad when the decent majority suffer from the threat posed by the lunatic fringe, but sheer logic surely imposes such draconian action. The hooligan mob travels abroad for the violence; whatever happens on the field is of secondary importance. It is no use the police anti-hooligan operation diligently targeting known hooligans and issuing restriction orders against them, or even advising the Portuguese authorities to refuse them entry.

Year by year, alas, a whole new crop of hooligans emerges, on which there will be no chapter and verse. An ounce of prevention is worth a ton of cure. Otherwise, it is as inevitable as the sun rising in the east that we shall see a reprise of what happened in Charleroi, Marseille or in Sunderland when Turkey came to play there.

ITALIAN football, alas, is still in a state of denial. In a recent newspaper column, I evoked the old story of how Internazionale, having successfully bribed the referees of their 1964 and 1965 European Cup semi-finals, failed to buy Gyorgy Vadas, the Hungarian referee of the 1966 semi at San Siro, against Real Madrid. The Spanish side drew that match, the second leg, to win on aggregate, and went on to take the title.

Instant outrage in Italy. Abuse rained upon my head. There were reports that two distinguished members of that Inter team – Giacinto Facchetti and Sandrino Mazzola, with whom I'd long been friendly – were much put out, and rumours of libel actions being launched.

If Facchetti and Mazzola were distressed then I am sorry, but since the initial *Sunday Times* investigation that disclosed these skeletons in Inter's cupboard goes back to the 1970s, surely they must have been well aware of the well-established accusations by now – though I've no doubt they were quite unaware of such skullduggery at the time.

'Vadas said he was offered the equivalent of five Mercedes cars to bend the European Cup semi-final in Inter's favour'

With the current Inter president Massimo Moratti perpetually under fire from the fans and for ever contrasted with his successful father, Angelo, who led the club during the 1960s, it seemed an appropriate time to revisit the Vadas affair.

Vadas and his linesmen arrived in Milan to be met and constantly shadowed by Inter's fixer-in-chief, Dezso Solti. Vadas told Hungarian journalist Peter Borenich he was offered the equivalent of five Mercedes cars to bend the game in Inter's favour, double that if Inter won by a penalty, five times that were it to come in extra-time.

The referee and his linesmen were then brought by Solti to Angelo Moratti's villa, where the president gave each of them a gold watch and ordered that they be given all kinds of costly electrical, state-of-the-art equipment.

Bravely, Vadas refused to be corrupted. He refereed the game with impeccable neutrality. At half-time, Solti invaded his dressing-room, incensed, to accuse him of refusing Inter three penalties. When Vadas got home, it was to be berated by the Hungarian federation secretary for his honest officiating! He would never get another international game of any kind.

If any idiot wishes to sue, let him remember that through all the years and all our revelations NOT A SINGLE WRIT HAS EVER BEEN ISSUED!

IT WAS sad to see Welsh hopes of reaching the European Championship finals disappear in Cardiff against Russia – far the better, more sophisticated, technical and tactical team on the night.

After the game, I commiserated with Wales manager Mark Hughes on the absence of his two speedy attackers, Craig Bellamy and Simon

France beat Germany 3-0 in a friendly in Gelsenkirchen

15/11/03

Portugal are held 1-1 by Greece in a friendly staged at the new stadium in Aveiro

15/11/03

Wayne Rooney scores at Old Trafford but England are beaten 3-2 by Denmark

16/11/03

Davies. That was no excuse, he replied, more generously than accurately. For without such devastating speed, even with the presence of the equally quick and hugely talented Ryan Giggs, Wales are a seriously diminished team.

When they beat Italy in Cardiff last October, Davies and Bellamy were key figures, their pace and control causing havoc in the opposing defence. Lacking both of them against Russia, Hughes brought on the very quick Robert Earnshaw only after 58 minutes when the die was largely cast, and mistakenly used Jason Koumas wide on the right. This has never been Koumas' position, and he could hardly be called pacy.

Former Wales boss John Toshack felt it was wrong to use Earnshaw on the right rather than centrally alongside John Hartson, for once subdued and poorly supported. But I would disagree, remembering what a difference Earnshaw made when he came on, far too late, precisely on that right wing in Belgrade against Serbia & Montenegro in August. Then, he so nearly equalised, but Wales were to lose the match 1-0.

Hughes read that game so badly wrong. Had he not done so, it is arguable that his team could have finished top of their group and qualified automatically.

'Hughes read the Serbia game so badly wrong. Had he not done so, Wales could well have finished top of their group'

In the absence of Hartson, Hughes illogically stuck to the same pattern but elected to use Nathan Blake in Hartson's role. It never began to work; Blake just couldn't do what Hartson can and was hardly to be blamed for that. Time and again moves broke down on him. But in any case Hughes' approach to the game, timorous and cautious in the extreme, was badly erroneous. The Serbs, so recently beaten by little Azerbaijan, were surely there for the taking, low in morale – which steadily improved as they were handed the initiative.

Having said all that, I am glad Hughes is to stay on in the job.

WHAT a monumental mess has been made of suspending England players. It is to be hoped that the amiable Brendan Batson, deputy chief executive of the Professional Footballers' Association, can straighten it out. Meanwhile, the new FA chief executive, Mark Palios, has, alas, made an uncertain and confused beginning. Still, he has surely made a better fist of it than Gordon Taylor, grand wealthy panjandrum of the PFA, who has obstinately continued to plead the indefensible case of Rio Ferdinand, which has been ludicrously confused with that of Alan Smith.

The Leeds player merely threw a plastic bottle back into the crowd, and the police in due course decided there would be no prosecution. Ferdinand failed to turn up for a drugs test and is extremely lucky the FA has been able to opt out of the automatic ban imposed in these cases on athletes.

Clarification is badly needed, with the cases of James Beattie – convicted of a driving offence – and Nicky Butt – impugned on a later-withdrawn charge of assault – evidence of inconsistent treatment. But the asinine behaviour of the England players before their match in Turkey, when they threatened a boycott then comically backed down, suggests that, just as war is supposedly too important to be left to generals, football is too important to be left to footballers.

Read Brian Glanville's weekly column at www.worldsoccer.com

Notes & quotes

"Thierry Henry is light years ahead of anything we have in Germany."
Franz Beckenbauer hails the Arsenal attacker after France's 3-0 friendly win against his country.

"It doesn't make sense to earn a lot of money when your team does not live up to public expectations."
Ukrainian Viktor Bondarenko stands down as Mozambique coach following a defeat by Guinea.

Jeered...Seedorf

"I don't know why my old fans at Ajax whistled and booed me. When I go back to Real, the fans welcome me."
Milan midfielder Clarence Seedorf, a key figure in Ajax's Champions League victory in 1995, wonders what he has done to offend Amsterdam supporters.

"Jens Lehmann is childish, unsporting and provocative."
Internazionale centre-back Marco Materazzi reserves his rancour for the Arsenal keeper in the wake of the Serie A side's 5-1 Champions League thrashing at the San Siro.

Smiles all round as teenager Freddy Adu signs for Major League Soccer

19/11/03

Ruud Van Nistelrooy is lifted into the air by his Holland team-mates after scoring a hat-trick in the 6-0 demolition of Scotland in the Euro 2004 play-offs

19/11/03

Mexico and Iceland play out a goalless draw as goalkeeper Jorge Campos plays the last 25 minutes of his final international...as a striker

19/11/03

WS WORLD SOCCER Paul Gardner

Why do some players and coaches insist on extolling the ugly side of the beautiful game?

NOW THIS IS the sort of thing that really does get my goat, big time. Listen to Juvenal Olmos, the coach of Chile, speaking before the most recent World Cup qualifiers:

"The most important thing is to be at the next World Cup, so I'm not interested in this romantic illusion about playing good football. Chile has a clear target, which is not to play pretty football but to be much more effective than in the last qualifiers, after which we had to watch the World Cup on television."

Having thus banished the beautiful game from his and Chile's horizons, Olmos sallied forth to play Uruguay and Paraguay with a – presumably – ugly (but, of course, effective) version of the game.

There is, I'm pleased to report, a happy ending. Chile lost both games.

Will that mean Olmos will now look more kindly on playing 'pretty' football? Of course not. I would guess that, if anything, the defeats will reinforce his determination to play – shall we say – a more robust version of the sport.

Where does it come from, this oft-repeated notion that to win the big games you have to play ugly, that you can either win or play pretty football but not both?

I don't know of any studies that have been done to prove or disprove the point, nor am I aware of any convincing statistics on the matter. But players and coaches talk authoritatively as though ugly football is a necessity.

"In these games, beautiful football is just a memory" – that's Fabio Cannavaro before a horrendously boring Euro 2000 qualifier with Belarus in 1999.

"Don't expect beautiful football," said Germany's assistant coach Michael Skibbe in 2001 as they prepared to meet Ukraine in a World Cup qualifying play-off.

Nor is it always the poor teams, the ones that couldn't produce decent football however hard they tried, that use the argument. We hear it far too often from Brazil – who, of course, are the team most frequently 'accused' of playing pretty football. "No more beautiful game," said Dunga in 1990, "this is the Brazil of sweat and sacrifice." And Big Phil Scolari mocked the pretty stuff when he took over as coach in 2001.

Frequently – as in the Italian and German examples cited above – it is during qualifying rounds that dourness is defiantly shouted, with the excuse that the good stuff will come later. In 1999 goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon promised that "in time we'll see a more entertaining and pleasing Italy".

The implication is that although a team must fight and claw and scratch to qualify, once that has been achieved, it can commence – or revert to – playing good football.

'It is deplorable when good teams choose to play ugly. In 1999 we had the pitiful sight of Italy scared into negativity by having to play Belarus'

Something that Italy did, in fact, do in Euro 2000.

It is as though there should be two national teams – a down-and-dirty version for the qualifiers, and an elite version for the finals. If that is so, it is a pretty heavy indictment of the current qualifying systems, which thus stand accused of encouraging ugly football.

And maybe they do. The home-and-away set up notoriously fosters caution by the away team, even an outright renunciation of any attempt to attack. The sort of thing that Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger recently accused Fulham of doing at club level: "They refused to play. They just defended...and refused to go forward when they won the ball."

Another element of the problem in tournament qualifiers is the abundance – particularly in Europe – of no-hope teams that feel, nay know, that negative, spoiling tactics are their only chance. Why on earth would teams like that allow themselves to get caught up in the "romantic illusion" of the beautiful game?

What follows is that bad soccer drives out good soccer. The better footballing teams are dragged down to a lower level. That's merely regrettable – but it becomes deplorable when good teams choose to play ugly.

Thus we have the pitiful sight of Italy, in 1999 ranked eighth in the world, scared into utter negativity by having to play Belarus, ranked 100th. Or 14th-ranked Germany quaking at the thought of a trip to 44th-ranked Ukraine.

Is there any logic to this? In more recent qualifying activity, Wales travelled to Moscow and produced a game of numbing defensive boredom – but came away with a draw. This was considered a triumph. In the

Spain qualify for Euro 2004 after beating Norway 3-0 in Oslo

19/11/03

Vadim Evseev, the Russian felled by Ryan Giggs' elbow in the first leg, heads the winner in the Euro 2004 play-off second leg against Wales

19/11/03

Sonny Anderson celebrates his injury-time winner for Villarreal against Barcelona in La Liga

22/11/03

San Jose Earthquakes lift the MLS Cup

23/11/03

return game, Russia eschewed the cautious route and won 1-0. Exit Wales.

Proving what? Only this – that being cautious is not necessarily the best policy, and that being adventurous is not necessarily a recipe for failure.

The argument in favour of the attacking game was made in spectacular fashion in the USA in November when San Jose Earthquakes, finding themselves 4-0 down in a quarter-final against Los Angeles Galaxy, simply went for broke and scored five goals in what was hailed as the most exciting game in the eight-year history of Major League Soccer.

After that, goalscoring became a habit for Earthquakes; Kansas City were beaten 3-2 in the semi-final, then Chicago Fire were swamped 4-2 in the championship decider.

I would suggest there are as many instances like that, where boldness has worked, as there are examples of caution taking the day. The vast difference between the two being that boldness produces exhilaration and excitement, while caution bores the pants off everyone.

That is my unanswerable case for risk-taking. Of course, it won't be listened to. The orthodox wisdom is that a defensive strategy is the way to win big games. For far too many coaches, attacking football remains a romantic illusion.

WS WORLD SOCCER Mediawatch

News and views from the world's press.
Compiled by Keir Radnedge

Flight of fancy

"Real Madrid's departure from Osasuna was delayed by a female fan of keeper Iker Casillas who sneaked on to the plane unnoticed and refused to leave unless she could have a photograph taken with her hero. The picture was duly taken after the intervention of club president Florentino Perez. A woman was later detained by police."
– *from* Mundo Deportivo. *More flight problems for Real after the passport snag before their trip to Belgrade.*

Freedom of silence

"Our reporter Joel Domenighetti was escorted from Auxerre's stadium on the instructions of the manager, Guy Roux, following an article ('Auxerre on the brink') in our edition of October 27."
– L'Equipe *on paying the price for freedom of speech.*

"Marc Benoist was barred from the press box for the Monaco v PSV Champions League tie on the instructions of Monaco president Pierre Svara. In 48 years of covering European club cups, it is the first time a *France Football* representative has been denied his right to work."
– L'Equipe's *sister magazine on paying the same price.*

What a dope

"In rowing, if you have a positive dope test or miss a test, you are banned for life. None of this Mickey Mouse stuff that you do nothing for two years then make a comeback ...I can't understand how Rio Ferdinand could miss a test."
– *Olympic gold medallist Sir Steven Redgrave in* Night&Day *on the sort of discipline that makes international champions.*

Selling point...Far East fans leave no doubts about their hero's identity

Polls apart?

"I didn't insult the referee [Graham Poll]. I just asked him politely if he was a Tottenham fan."
– *Blackburn manager Graeme Souness quoted in* Kicker, *bringing Poll to the attention of German fans.*

"Poll – a very dangerous referee."
– *from* Marca, *bringing Poll to the attention of Spanish fans before the Euro play-off against Norway.*

Becks means business

"Real Madrid have reportedly sold 1.7 million replica shirts worldwide so far this season, with more than 1m bearing the name of Beckham. Real sold only 250,000 in total last season."
– *from* Soccer Investor.

Football divide

"The story of rugby and football is the story of two nations – not of rich and poor or privileged and unprivileged but of two approaches to life, two cultures. Rugby represents much of what is best about our society, football much of what is worst."
– *from the* Daily Mail. *A typical example of the nonsense that flooded the UK media after England's rugby World Cup win.*

Deportivo edge closer to the Champions League knockout stages after beating AEK 3-0 at home

25/11/03

Thierry Henry celebrates Arsenal's spectacular 5-1 win over Internazionale in Milan

25/11/03

David Beckham is honoured by the Queen at Buckingham Palace

27/11/03

Chelsea go clear at the top of the Premiership after a 1-0 win over Manchester United

30/11/03

WS WORLD SOCCER Jim Holden

Ruhr fans are the real deal: they deserve a gong for their services to football

WORLD SOCCER'S awards are now into their 22nd year and going from strength to strength, as illustrated by the intelligence of the choice of the winners for 2003, particularly Pavel Nedved.

What riles me, though, as various gongs are handed out with great fanfare at this time of year, is the absence of any recognition of the role of supporters in football.

So, my fond wish for 2004 is that *World Soccer* might add a fourth category to its grown-up awards and institute a prize for best fans of the year.

Clearly, this could not go out to public vote, because readers would loyally send in coupons for their own team.

In past years there would have been some obvious winners – the Danish Roligans who charmed everyone at the 1984 European Championship; the Irish blarney army who sang their way through the 1994 World Cup in America; South Korea's 'Be the Reds' who filled the streets of Seoul in their millions in 2002.

During the past 12 months we might honour the passion and loyalty of the Celtic thousands who followed their team to the UEFA Cup Final. Or the football fever generated in little Latvia, or the fans of Notts County desperately trying to keep alive the world's oldest professional soccer club.

My pick for 2003, however, are the supporters of the Ruhr region of Germany, packing the wonderful new grounds of clubs like Borussia Dortmund, Schalke, Bayer Leverkusen, Koln, Bochum and Borussia Monchengladbach.

Dortmund have been getting average home gates of 78,000 in the Bundesliga. Schalke, based in the town of Gelsenkirchen, have an average of 63,000.

The overall effect has been to put the Bundesliga top of the European chart for attendances, above England, Spain and Italy, where the soccer is supposed to be superior and the star players more glamorous. It is a surprising but revealing statistic, and one that needs a little examination.

Why is it happening? One reason is simply the exciting nature of the football being played in Germany this season, and the fact that a host of teams have a realistic ambition of challenging for the title. The Bundesliga is a far more open competition than its rivals.

Another is the modernisation of grounds in preparation for the 2006 World Cup.

Tournament official Andreas Kroll, who heads the Cities and Stadia Department, says: "The arenas are bigger and safer and have more comfort, even in the rest rooms. Fans have changed. They treat the stadium as if it is their own living-room, and the degree of identification with 'your own place' has certainly been going up."

Paying attention to the wishes of supporters is vital. Many German stadiums have also accommodated the desire for standing areas, which can be cleverly converted for matches that are required to be all-seater.

'The Bundesliga tops Europe's attendance chart this season partly because of the exciting nature of its football'

Perhaps the most vital factor of all, however, is that ticket prices have remained affordable to the average spectator.

You can watch Borussia Dortmund for as little as £6, while the most expensive seat is £29. They are figures that would astonish football followers in England, where prices in the Premiership often start at £25.

Prices are an issue beginning to trouble even the wealthiest English clubs, such as Arsenal, whose influential vice-chairman David Dein believes that gentrification of the football crowds will seriously damage the long-term health of the game.

"You can sense a lack of passion in the Premiership crowds," says Dein, "and high ticket prices are a factor. Manchester United's captain Roy Keane was correct in what he said about the 'prawn sandwich' supporters.

"It's a problem we have to solve. I want a future where everybody can afford to go, especially the kids, because they are the future of football. We must not price them out."

It was good to hear Dein, a leading player in the G-14 group of elite European clubs, talking that way. Football must not lose touch with its real fans in the relentless drive for corporate profits, marketing opportunities and customer spending.

Thrilling football at reasonable prices in decent stadiums is what the game needs. That is what Germany is providing – and why the industrial Ruhr Valley has become the modern hotbed of international football.

I reckon that deserves recognition. Don't you?

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Easy does it

SID LOWE
in Madrid

Spain book their passage to Portugal after a play-off win over Norway

IT WASN'T THE triumphal march they anticipated, still less the effortless glide demanded by the press, but Spain will be at the European Championship finals in neighbouring Portugal.

They were supposed to walk through a group that could 'only' offer Greece, Ukraine, Armenia and Northern Ireland. But five fateful June days, during which Spain suffered a 1-0 home defeat by Greece and a 0-0 draw in Belfast, left them trailing in Group 6 and needing to go through the play-offs to qualify.

When Norway – victors over Spain at Euro 2000 – were plucked from UEFA's over-sized brandy glass, things began to look even worse. Most expected an extremely rough ride and there were even fears Spain could be on their way out.

That pessimism was exacerbated still further by the first leg. It took an 85th-minute own goal from Henning Berg to give Spain a 2-1 victory in Valencia and the predictions pointed to them suffering even more in the freezing cold of Oslo. No wonder the Spanish were rueing the chances that got away.

Not least coach Inaki Saez. He had implored his players to be "tigers" before the first leg and his side tore into Norway during a frantic last 15 minutes, yet they just could not find the goals to put

All right on the night...Spain's players celebrate reaching the Euro 2004 finals after their triumph in Oslo

● Real Betis striker Dani banged his head and had to go off with concussion during his side's recent match with Deportivo. But while the striker claimed not to remember anything, it sounded suspiciously like he had recalled the entire night when he said: "I don't remember the match. I don't remember the pouring rain. I don't remember the goal I scored that the ref disallowed. I don't even remember the final score being 0-0."

Memory man...Dani

them on the road to the finals. "We created 56 chances," sighed Saez. In fact, Spain had 34 shots, 14 in the last 15 minutes. The introduction of Real Betis winger Joaquin for that last frenetic period launched a sagging Spain back on the offensive, and it was his cross after a clever cut-back on the right that Berg deflected in.

It was appropriate that Spain's winner should be an own goal, for after Raul's glanced equaliser the hosts could not defeat Norway's inspired goalkeeper Espen Johnsen. He made a string of exceptional saves, including a sensational double stop in the last minute. "He was incredible," winced Spain midfielder Ruben Baraja, who ended the game as an extra striker.

Incredible miss

But, just as against Greece and Northern Ireland in the summer – the games that got Spain into so fine a mess in the first place – the team also had themselves to blame. Raul was guilty of the most incredible of many misses when he pulled the ball down superbly only to dink an apologetically weak lob straight into Johnsen's grateful arms.

Spain could and should have sewn up the tie in Valencia. Instead, they travelled to Norway knowing that a 1-0 defeat would put them out – thanks to Steffen Iversen's apparently vital away goal.

It hardly augured well – not least because of the peripheral factors thought to be racked up against the Spanish. Yet fears about the weather, the referee and the condition of the pitch proved unfounded. The undersoil heating had been on for weeks, Pierluigi Collina was named as the match official and it wasn't that cold. Thermometers failed even to dip below zero.

More importantly, despite the nerves and the tension of a play-off, it turned out to be really rather easy for Spain. Saez replaced Fernando Torres with Juan Carlos Valeron and surprisingly dropped Baraja for Xabi Alonso and Sevilla's Jose Antonio Reyes for Vicente, while sticking with Joseba Etxeberria rather than first-leg hero Joaquin. And it worked: Spain were far, far too good for Norway. Far too good to be left out of Euro 2004.

Raul opened the scoring 10 minutes before half-time, slotting a neat finish from Valeron's clever pass. Although Spain's other goals – from Vicente and Etxeberria – came courtesy of dreadful defensive errors, victory was never in doubt. The visitors strolled their way around Oslo, effortlessly moving the ball from player to player, untouched by their opponents – Xabi Alonso completed an astonishing 98 passes, failing with just nine.

"It was one of the most complete games the national team has produced in a long, long time. The players have been immense," said Saez. "They had a gun to their heads and had to be everything or nothing. They proved themselves to be everything. This is a lesson in maturity for them – and for me. This could be good for us in Portugal." The Spanish public – finally showing signs of getting behind the team – hope he is right.

Signs of weakness

On the domestic front, it's as you were at the top of the table, with Valencia, Real Madrid and Deportivo leading after 13 games. All three sides, though, are beginning to show sneaking signs of weakness and have now lost seven games between them.

Depor manager Javier Irureta has bemoaned the television scheduling that has left his side playing many matches last thing on Sunday night – after all the other results are known. His complaint is not without reason, for Depor appear to be developing their now traditional vertigo that has cost them so often before. Twice now they have surprisingly lost at home, to Villarreal and Mallorca – both last thing on a Sunday night.

Meanwhile, Valencia's fans must be driving themselves just as bananas trying to work out their own team. Having struggled for goals in the past two seasons, Valencia have put five past Mallorca, four past Espanyol and three past Atletico Madrid and Zaragoza, with Mista having already scored more than in the whole of last season. And now that's sorted, the *Ches*' normally rock-solid defence has begun to wobble, conceding five in their last two matches, against Murcia and Zaragoza.

As for Real Madrid, they have performed patchily but generally got away with it thanks to the quality of their *galacticos*, collecting home victories against Albacete and Racing Santander that were far from convincing. However, defeat did come, in Seville, where – in the absence of full-backs Roberto Carlos and Michel Salgado – the weakness of the squad was made abundantly clear.

Sevilla blew Madrid away with their frenetic pace, asphyxiating pressure, slick passing and willingness to go for the jugular. Led by the sensational Reyes, they scored three times in the opening quarter of an hour and four by half-time.

Ronaldo scored an excellent goal, but nothing could wipe the smile from the face of Reyes, a *Sevillista* through and through. "It's like a dream," he beamed. "Especially as Betis lost too!"

'The players had a gun to their heads but proved immense'

Spain coach Inaki Saez

Then there were four

Inter's win in Turin brings them into the title race with Juventus, Milan and Roma

PADDY AGNEW
in Rome

IT IS LIKELY that the evening of Saturday, November 29 will prove a turning point in this season's Italian championship contest. Internazionale's 3-1 defeat of League leaders and champions Juventus in their own Stadio delle Alpi backyard not only rewrote the seasonal 'stats' book but, more importantly, indicated that an Inter revival might finally be under way.

It would have taken a brave pundit to predict such an emphatic Inter victory. After all, Juventus were on an unbeaten 16-match run in Serie A, Champions League and Italian Cup games. Only twice in post-war history (Milan in 1954-55 and Torino in 1976-77) has a club made a faster Serie A start. The Old Lady went into the Inter game with a record of eight wins and two draws (against Roma and Milan) from 10 League games, and having already wrapped up a Champions League second round place with two group games still to play.

In contrast, Inter's post-Hector Cuper revival and Champions League aspirations appeared to have been smashed to smithereens when they were humiliated by Arsenal in a 5-1 Champions League drubbing at the San Siro three days before the clash with Juventus. On top of that, Inter, who had not beaten Juventus in Turin since 1993, were without key players such as defender Fabio Cannavaro and striker Christian Vieri, while Juve fielded their strongest possible side.

In the driving seat

Yet, despite all the negative omens, Inter made the better, more aggressive start, striking lucky when Vieri's replacement, Argentinian Julio Cruz, hit a peach of a free-kick to put them in front after 12 minutes. From that point, Inter were in the driving seat.

With Juventus desperate to get back into the game and willing to push forward in numbers, Inter remained constantly dangerous in counter-attacks that made the most of the brilliantly explosive pace

Opening strike...Julio Cruz (No 9) fires in the free-kick that put Inter on their way to a memorable 3-1 win over Juventus in Turin

of Nigerian Obafemi Martins. The turning point in the game came late in the first half when Juve's Mauro Camoranesi missed a relatively easy chance to equalise.

The longer it went, the better Inter looked. So it was no surprise when Javier Zanetti broke away on the counter to set up Cruz for his second in the 69th minute. Six minutes later, Martins completed the Juventus misery, stealing a goal that owed much to his pace and a good deal to a defensive error by Nicola Legrottaglie.

Even though Juventus scored a late compensatory goal through Paolo Montero, it mattered little. In one match, Inter had erased the Arsenal debacle and unexpectedly put themselves back into the championship contest, making it a four-horse race with Juventus, Milan and Roma.

By the end of the weekend Inter had moved to fourth, within five points of joint leaders Milan and Roma and just four behind third-placed Juventus. Significantly, too, the victory over Juve was Inter's first over a direct title rival since beating Roma 3-1 20 months earlier.

Happy Zaccheroni

All of which left new coach Alberto Zaccheroni, who took over from Cuper in October, understandably satisfied. "Tonight, we simply did not let Juventus play," he said. "After the Arsenal game, I told my players that it was just a one-off and to pay no attention to it. Fortunately, they paid more heed to what I said than to what some commentators were saying."

Juve coach Marcello Lippi offered no excuses, paying Inter a handsome compliment. "Well done, Inter. They played a hell of a game," he said. "They had the edge on us when it came to sheer commitment and desire to win, which are usually our greatest weapons. Paradoxically, the fact that they were missing players became a psychological advantage for them."

Juventus will recover from this temporary setback and resume normal winning service. The larger question concerns where Inter will go from here. For the time being, the jury is out but the suspicion is Inter are back – hungrier, more self-assured and more offensive than at any stage under Cuper in the past two seasons.

Roma and Milan were quick to profit from Juve's slip, defeating Lecce and Modena respectively next day to go joint top. Both sides, too, had just enjoyed a successful week in European competition – Milan's impressive 1-0 win away to Ajax had put them into the second round of the Champions League, while a late equaliser for Roma to secure a 1-1 draw at Hajduk Split was enough to see them into the next round of the UEFA Cup 2-1 on aggregate.

● In Lisbon for the draw for the Euro 2004 finals, Giovanni Trapattoni made no secret of his relief at seeing Italy grouped with Sweden, Denmark and Bulgaria. Given Italy's miserable flop at last year's World Cup, however, the coach did offer cautionary words, saying: "The important thing is to start with all our players fit and well. Remember how we got to the World Cup with a number of key players injured. Remember, too, how France and Argentina went out quickly – a lot of their players had just finished hard seasons with us or in England."

Euro warning...Trapattoni (left)

One other potentially significant result was Lazio's 3-0 humiliation at little Siena, this season's Serie A debutants. Coming at the end of a month which had started with a 4-0 Champions League drubbing by Chelsea and a 2-0 derby defeat by Roma, Lazio's fourth League defeat of the season suggested all too clearly that things are not well at Formello and Roberto Mancini faces the biggest test of his short coaching career.

On the international front, Giovanni Trapattoni's side interrupted a 10-match unbeaten run when losing 3-1 to Poland in a Warsaw friendly on November 12. Four days later, Italy pulled off an uninspiring 1-0 home win against Romania in Ancona.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of these two games concerned the Italians' goalscorers, Antonio Cassano against Poland and Marco Di Vaio against Romania. Cassano, for long the 'boy wonder' of Italian football, made his debut against Poland and his overall performance plus his goal represented just about the only positive note for Italy in that match.

Di Vaio was continuing a splendid November, during which he had also scored important goals for Juventus (against Milan and Udinese). His goal against Romania was his second for Italy, the first coming against Azerbaijan in the 4-0 European Championship qualifying win in October.

Both players have thus earned the rating of 'possible' if not 'probable' for a Euro 2004 squad in which they face daunting opposition from strikers such as Vieri, Alessandro Del Piero, Francesco Totti, Filippo Inzaghi, Vincenzo Montella, Bernardo Corradi and Fabrizio Miccoli.

But Trapattoni knows only too well that extended Champions League runs for such as Juventus and Milan, not to mention a tough, four-way League contest, could make life difficult for him next summer. Trapattoni's problems could well be Zaccheroni's delight, since he would be more than pleased to find his Inter involved in the shakedown of either competition. Given that historic defeat of Juventus, all things are possible.

'I told the players to forget Arsenal, that was a one-off result'

Inter coach Alberto Zaccheroni

Deisler still suffering

NICK BIDWELL
in Munich

The Bayern midfielder is diagnosed with depression after a 'help me' call to the club

IF THERE WAS an award for the most unfortunate player in the Bundesliga, Bayern Munich and Germany midfield star Sebastian Deisler would conclusively top the poll. At 23, he has already endured 15 serious injuries, five operations and is now battling depression.

Out with knee trouble for the best part of the past two years, Deisler at last looked to have put his physical problems behind him this autumn, showing the exceptional touch and imagination that persuaded Bayern to pay Hertha Berlin £7 million for him last year.

But a day after he performed excellently in Bayern's 4-1 home win over Dortmund – in which he set up two goals – the Bavarian club's general manager Uli Hoeness received an ominous phone call from Deisler, saying he could not go on and needed help.

After an initial examination by club doctor Hans-Wilhelm Muller-Wohlfahrt, Deisler was sent to a psychiatric clinic, where depression was diagnosed. The official line was that he was suffering from flu, but as the rumours began to circulate, the truth was laid bare. "We have been treating Sebastian Deisler for depression for the past 10 days," clinic chief Professor Florian Holsboer told a press conference. "We are very pleased with the results so far. He could recover fully in a few weeks, it might take longer. But we are confident his career is not in danger."

Holsboer was at pains to insist there were no parallels between Deisler's case and that of Hannover's Czech playmaker Jan Simak, out since September with acute nervous exhaustion. "Deisler is in good physical condition," he said. "From what I know, Simak was burnt out and simply did not have the strength to take to the field."

According to Holsboer, Deisler's countless injury setbacks had taken a mental toll, together with worries about the first child he and his Brazilian girlfriend Eunice were expecting in the new year.

Perhaps we should have seen all this coming. Lauded as the great white hope of German football as soon as he began turning it on for Monchengladbach as a teenager, the quietly-spoken and introverted Deisler was never at ease in the spotlight. "The greater the media and fans' interest, the more he cuts himself off," says former Hertha team-mate Dick Van Burik.

'He could recover fully in a few weeks. We are confident his career is not in danger'

Psychiatric clinic chief Professor Florian Holsboer

Thin end of the wedge...Deisler's injury worries and forthcoming fatherhood have affected his state of mind

Over at Stuttgart, meanwhile, the good times are rolling. The vibrant young team, expertly assembled by Felix Magath, are flying high in the Bundesliga after going unbeaten in their opening 13 games, and have also booked their place in the last 16 of the Champions League.

Stuttgart's accountants are pleased, too. The club have already amassed enough European prize money and marketing cash to wipe out debts of £13m, and more income is in the pipeline. Yet finance chief Ulrich Ruf remains cautious, saying: "We are delighted – but we aim to participate in the Champions League at least three times in a row."

Such goals are more realistic now talented Germany right-back Andreas Hinkel, linked with Juventus, Milan and Schalke, has instead extended his contract until 2007.

"Stuttgart's future is bright," he said. "We have the potential to win trophies. I'm only 21 and this is the place to develop. It gives me the best chance of staying in the national team and playing in the 2006 World Cup. There's time to move abroad."

Pressure on PSG

ERIK BIELDERMAN in Marseille

...but November brings unexpected pleasure for the capital's club

That's more like it...Halilhodzic (left) and his players celebrate victory in Marseille

PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN'S usual November crisis has been avoided for the first time in years.

November is a deeply depressing month in the French capital. The rain is heavy, there is often fog, and the evenings are dark by 5pm. PSG's normal slump in form merely seems to match the prevailing gloom.

Bosnian coach Vahid Halilhodzic was aware of the trend when he arrived from Rennes in June and was determined to ensure it did not continue this year.

PSG were 17th in mid-September. But after a great October – five wins and a draw – they were closing in on the top three of Lyon, Monaco and Marseille. Then, on November 1, Lens visited Parc des Princes and came away with a 1-0 victory.

Halilhodzic, aware of PSG's history, needed to provoke a reaction from his players. "They have to show what is in their hearts," he said. "They always say they love PSG, but now have to prove that by paying back the club. Words are not enough.

"The players must know that during the winter transfer market I will buy if they do not respond to the challenge.

"In Paris everybody wants everything immediately. But when I arrived I told them it would be a terrible year. The situation was too serious to expect miracles."

Still, the defeat by Lens was followed by an unexpected 1-0 win at Nantes and a 0-0 draw at home to Nice, who have the League's toughest defence. So attention turned to the final game of the month – the crunch clash at arch-rivals Marseille.

Halilhodzic's men responded with a 1-0 victory thanks to a last-minute goal from Fabrice Fiorese. It saved their month and, most likely, the first half of their season. A win over Marseille means so much more than three points. It's a matter of pride for the fans, irrespective of what happens afterwards.

Victory took PSG up to fourth place, nine points behind leaders Monaco, but Halilhodzic is keeping his feet firmly on the ground. "We need to stay in the top five," he says. "I believe Marseille, Monaco, Lyon and even Auxerre are better than us. Our objective is to qualify for Europe."

The pressure to do well in the League increased after PSG were knocked out of the League Cup, another route to the UEFA Cup. What made their first-round exit worse was that it came at the hands of Second Division Gueugnon.

Canal Plus, the pay-TV company that owns the club, gave Halilhodzic £12m for new players last summer, including Pauleta (from Bordeaux), Argentina defender Juan Pablo Sorin (Barcelona) and Red Star Belgrade forward Branko Boskovic.

After five months only the Portugal striker has settled well, but at least the fans have been prepared to give the team time because of Halilhodzic's reputation. The win in Marseille – in November, of all times – has confirmed his status.

● The reaction to the Euro 2004 finals draw, which has pitted France and England together – Croatia and Switzerland make up Group B – has been generally favourable.

France meet England in their first match, in Lisbon on June 13, and coach Jacques Santini said: "It will be like a derby. We both know the strengths and the weaknesses of each other's players very well as most of our stars play in England."

Zinedine Zidane, relishing pitting his wits against England captain David Beckham, his Real Madrid team-mate, could not resist turning a psychological screw, saying: "David told me the draw before training the other day and I could tell by the look on his face he didn't fancy meeting us."

Manchester United defender Mickael Silvestre joked: "I have told the English players here that from January 1, I won't talk to any of them! Seriously, though, the group is OK but we have to remember what happened to us at the World Cup."

'The players say they love PSG but now they must prove it. Words are not enough'

PSG coach Vahid Halilhodzic

Eye for a chance...two-goal Ronaldo bursts between Diego Forlan and Nelson Abeijon to get in a shot in the 3-3 draw with Uruguay

Hard labour

Coach Parreira is right to say South America's World Cup qualifiers are the most testing

BRIAN HOMEWOOD in Rio de Janeiro

HALF-TIME IN last month's World Cup qualifier between Brazil and Uruguay in Curitiba. The world champions, with Ronaldo, Rivaldo and Kaka all in inspired form, are slicing through the visiting defence almost at will, are 2-0 ahead and could easily have scored five.

Uruguay coach Juan Ramon Carrasco, who looks as if he has just walked off the set of *Saturday Night Fever* in his wide-lapelled cream suit, appears to have got it horribly wrong by fielding three strikers and only one ball-winner in midfield.

Yet, instead of strengthening the team at the back, Carrasco takes off defender Adrian Romero and replaces him with Alvaro Recoba, one of the players least likely to come back and do some marking. Globo television's commentators rub their hands in glee and prepare themselves for a hatful of goals in the second half.

Barely 30 minutes later, Uruguay are leading 3-2 and Brazil appear on the point of losing a home World Cup qualifier for the first time. It takes a typical Ronaldo strike – a low, angled shot from the edge of the penalty area – to salvage a 3-3 draw.

Three days earlier, Brazil had done well to come away with a 1-1 draw in Peru before an 80,000 crowd at Lima's Monumental stadium. Peru have not qualified for a World Cup since 1982 but the current side, which includes Nolberto Solano in midfield and Bayern Munich's Claudio Pizarro and Club Brugge's unpredictable Andres Mendoza in attack, are good enough to unsettle any team.

No wonder Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira regards qualifying for the World Cup as harder than winning the tournament itself.

Media contempt

Europeans often sneer at the idea that four of the 10 South American teams qualify for the World Cup – with the fifth playing off against a side from another region for another place. But Parreira believes his team face a much tougher task than the likes of England, Germany or Italy.

"There [Europe], you can look at the groups and there are usually two teams that you know will qualify," he said before the Peru game. "Here, you have Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Chile, Colombia and Ecuador. Then there are Venezuela, who are no

longer the lightweights they were before, Bolivia and the altitude, and Peru, who have improved enormously. Any big team from Europe would have a tough time qualifying in South America."

Unfortunately for Parreira, it is not just Europeans who believe that his team have it easy. The Brazilian media treat their footballing neighbours with the utmost contempt and see only defects in their own team rather than merits in the opposition.

The public still nurture the myth that the World Cup qualifiers are a formality and that Brazil should waltz through their 18 matches. That puts enormous pressure on the team when they win by 'only' one goal or, heaven forbid, draw or lose.

The overblown expectations prompted a predictable barrage of criticism after the Peru match, during which Rivaldo put Brazil ahead from a 20th-minute penalty – his first international goal since the 2002 World Cup quarter-final against England – and Solano headed Peru's equaliser just before the hour.

Brazil, who had beaten Colombia and Ecuador in their opening qualifiers in September, could have been three ahead at half-time, with Rivaldo – clearly relishing his national team outings even more after being ostracised at Milan – crashing a volley against the bar.

The second half was a different story as Peru, coached by Brazilian Paulo Autuori, took the game to the visitors. In the end, a draw was a decent result for both sides, but none of this impressed the Brazilian critics.

Globo commentator Galvao Bueno described Ronaldo as "a little bit on the fat side", while calling Parreira "predictable".

The latter has become a frequent complaint. Eight of the players who began the Peru game also started the first two qualifiers, and for the third time in a row, Parreira brought off Emerson midway through the second half and replaced him with Renato. As on the previous two occasions, Renato's more refined approach brought some extra life to the midfield.

It was all too much for former international Walter Casagrande, now part of the Globo commentary team. "He does this every game, and in every game we have the same deficiency," he said. "Why doesn't he get it right from the start? I can't understand it."

Other complaints were that the midfield trio of Emerson, Gilberto Silva and Ze Roberto did not give enough support to the attacking trio of Ronaldo, Rivaldo and Kaka. "There's just no place for those three defensive midfielders," wrote Fernando Calazans in *O Globo*. "We have an unproductive, infertile midfield that leaves the three attackers isolated from the rest of the team."

Parreira pointed out that his side had still created more clearcut chances but nevertheless made one concession to his critics for the Uruguay game. He dropped Emerson and gave Renato – who burst on to the scene last year in helping Santos win the Brazilian championship – his first start.

Brazil responded by producing their best 45 minutes of football since Parreira took over in January as they pulled the *Charruas* to pieces. Kaka bundled home Ronaldo's cross to open the scoring, and the 'Phenomenon', apparently unhindered by his alleged flab, added the second 10 minutes later.

It was Ronaldo's 50th international goal and came from a typically innovative piece of skill. Latching on to Ze Roberto's chip, he somehow managed to flick the bouncing ball past goalkeeper Gustavo Munua with his right shoulder and tapped it into the net.

Unfortunately for Brazil, Lucio and Roque Junior both had nightmare matches in defence, and Manchester United's Diego Forlan took advantage to score two close-range goals after half-time to level the scores. Then the unbelievable happened as the usually dependable Gilberto Silva, under no pressure, headed a harmless Recoba free-kick into his own goal. His blushes were spared by Ronaldo's late strike.

"We went from the dream of a great victory to the nightmare of a terrible defeat," said Parreira. "It would have been incredible to have lost this game after the amount of possession we had." The draw left Brazil third in the group with eight points from four matches and 14 more to play on the long road to Germany 2006. The competition resumes in March, when Brazil travel to Asuncion to play Paraguay, who have bounced back from a 4-1 loss in Peru to win three in a row and go top. After that, Brazil's fixture list includes Argentina in Buenos Aires, Uruguay in Montevideo, Chile in Santiago, Bolivia at 12,500ft above sea level in La Paz, Ecuador at 9,000ft above sea level in Quito, and Venezuela in the scorching oil city of Maracaibo. How many European national team coaches would swap that for a group containing Scotland, Iceland, Lithuania and the Faroe Islands?

● Former national coach Vanderlei Luxemburgo, among those vilified by the 2001 government inquiry into corruption in Brazilian soccer, had the last laugh on his critics when his Cruzeiro side clinched the domestic championship on the last day of November with two games to spare. Cruzeiro's 2-1 win over Paysandu, allied with the 3-0 defeat of closest challengers Santos at Goias, stretched their lead to an uncatchable nine points.

Faithful to Palmeiras...Marcos

Traditional forces Palmeiras and Botafogo bounced back to the First Division at the first attempt after going down last season. But the most remarkable thing was that they had actually played in the Second Division at all. Big teams normally benefit from the so-called *Virada de Mesa* (literally, turning over the tables), when they wriggle out of relegation on a technicality. Brazil's World Cup keeper Marcos, one of the heroes of Palmeiras' return, surprised everyone by opting to stay when they went down rather than join a First Division club.

'Any big European team would have a tough time qualifying in South America'

Carlos Alberto Parreira

Feelgood factors

MLS is on a high after the signing of Freddy Adu and the highest-scoring Final

PAUL GARDNER in New York

THE SCENE WAS New York's legendary Madison Square Garden. Major League Soccer had a major story to tell, but a day earlier the news had somehow leaked into the national press. The *Washington Post* had announced that the League had signed Freddy Adu to a four-year contract.

Adu and his agent were rushed to New York. And so was his mother Emelia. She was important to this scenario...because Freddy is only 14. "This," intoned MLS Commissioner Don Garber, "is one of the most monumental days in the history of American soccer." Exaggeration maybe. But he has a point.

Astounding as it may seem, a slender, smiling, but oh-so-skilful 14-year-old may well be the most important thing that has happened to MLS in its eight-year history. Adu is a promoter's dream, wise and poised beyond his years, a natural.

His appeal is instant and will surely reach that huge audience of ordinary mainstream Americans that soccer yearns to embrace.

Add to that the fact that Adu's story is one that appeals to Americans, one that makes them feel good about themselves and their country. He was born in Ghana in 1989 but his mother had the dream of a new life across the ocean.

It's not easy to emigrate from Ghana to the USA. So huge is the list of applicants that the US State Department runs a lottery: put your name down and wait for the annual draw. In 1997, the Adus got lucky. They settled in the Washington DC area and eight-year-old Freddy found himself in the more organised atmosphere of American youth soccer.

Everyone noticed Freddy. His club went to France, and he was seen in Europe. Even then, there were offers, but his mother wasn't interested. At 12 Freddy was enrolled in the US Soccer Federation's training school in Bradenton, Florida. He is still there – but will leave next spring when he graduates and enters the pro game. In the meantime, life has suddenly begun to look like Hollywood for

Striking a pose...Ronnie Ekelund takes his team-mates' plaudits after giving San Jose the lead in the MLS Cup

Freddy. The night following the press conference, there he was on a late-night television show doing tricks with a ball.

Garber and MLS can be forgiven some exaggeration. The Commissioner's deputy, Ivan Gazidis, introduced Adu as "the best young player in the world" – and who would deny it? During this year's Under-17 World Championship in Finland, he stood out in an American team that did little to support him and in a tournament where he was three years younger than most of the other players.

Adu, we were told, had been approached by just about every major club in Europe – and turned them all down in favour of MLS and DC United, the club to which, under the MLS central-control system, he had been assigned.

Well, not quite. Some skullduggery was necessary to get Adu to DC United – the club nearest his home. By rights, Adu will have to enter the MLS draft next January, and whichever team has the first pick will, obviously, select him before anyone can blink. That team – because they had the worst record this past season – happens to be Dallas Burn. But Dallas have agreed – willingly, it is said – to give up their first-pick option to DC United in return for an 'allocation', meaning they will be able to add a top player, probably an experienced foreigner, to their squad for next season.

Did Adu really prefer DC United to Manchester United? Of course not. The fact – glossed over, finessed, ignored, evaded, downplayed, whatever – by MLS is that, under FIFA's new regulations governing the international transfer of young players, Adu cannot join a foreign club until he is 18.

MLS was his only realistic option. But it is a good one. He stays with his family and his friends. And he will almost certainly get first-team playing experience, something that would be unlikely with a top European club. What's more, Adu, already on a four-year, £650,000 sponsorship contract with Nike, will immediately become one of the highest-paid players in MLS.

Entertainment all round

If the League could feel good about Freddy, they had even more reason to purr after their showcase championship decider, MLS Cup 2003. MLS Cup 2002 was a disaster, an insipid 1-0 extra-time game that was particularly embarrassing as it went out on network television.This time round, what a difference. San Jose Earthquakes and Chicago Fire put on a superbly entertaining game, full of goals, saves, misses and incidents. In the pre-game press conference both coaches were asked if another unadventurous Final was to be expected. "You'll see goals," promised Earthquakes' Frank Yallop. "We're not going to pack it in." To which Fire's Dave Sarachan added: "We're gonna be aggressive."

San Jose had played two incredible, high-scoring games to reach the Final. Against Los Angeles Galaxy in the quarter-finals, they started the home, second leg 2-0 down and promptly conceded two more. But, switching to all-out attack, they overpowered their opponents and scored five. In the one-leg semi-final against Kansas City Wizards, Quakes did it again, twice coming from behind to win 3-2 with a beautifully-taken golden goal from Landon Donovan.

So to the Final – in the perfect setting of the new Home Depot Center stadium in Los Angeles with a capacity 27,000 crowd and another nationwide television audience. And it all went swimmingly.

The first goal came after five minutes when Ronnie Ekelund gave Earthquakes the lead with a thunderous free-kick. They struck again seven minutes from half-time when Jamil Walker's through ball was pounced on by Donovan and slammed past advancing keeper Zach Thornton.

Chicago hit back four minutes into the second half when DaMarcus Beasley bamboozled the Quakes defence and from no angle at all smashed a shot that seemed to go right through keeper Pat Onstad. The Fire jubilation lasted less than a minute, however, as midfielder Richard Mulrooney burst through to beat Thornton with a low cross-shot.

Four minutes later Fire pulled it back to 3-2 thanks to an own goal from Quakes substitute Chris Roner, who had been on the pitch only four minutes. That substitution began to look like the worst move in the history of soccer when two minutes later Roner brought Beasley down to give Chicago a penalty. Up stepped Ante Razov, one of the deadliest finishers in the League, but his weak effort was saved easily by Onstad. Fire were made to pay when Donovan nipped in front of Jim Curtin to touch Dwayne De Rosario's cross past Thornton.

That was it, 4-2 to San Jose in the highest-scoring MLS Final. "The fans certainly got their money's worth," said Sarachan.

Donovan, voted the Final's Most Valuable Player, was asked if he would consider returning to play in Europe – he had a spell at Bayer Leverkusen – but insisted he was happy at San Jose. "Do they love the game as much in Europe?" he asked, and quickly answered his own question by adding: "I'm not sure."

An interesting point. It may not be true that Freddy Adu chose to play in MLS rather than go with the glamour of Manchester United or Real Madrid. But it is a fact that Donovan – certainly the brightest so far of the American-bred players – sees no automatic necessity to play in Europe.

If that attitude represents a trend, it will hearten MLS, which – like all western hemisphere leagues – is always likely to lose its best young players to the moneybags clubs of Europe.

● While 14-year-old Freddy Adu was being signed, MLS went to the other extreme with its Most Valuable Player of the Season award. Kansas City Wizards midfielder Preki took the prize aged 40 after finishing top of the League's combined goals and assists chart for the season. Not surprisingly, the Belgrade-born player – real name Predrag Radosavljevic – is the oldest to win the award, which he also collected in 1997. In fact, he is the oldest player to collect an MVP accolade in the history of American professional sport.

Valuable veteran...Preki

'This is one of the most monumental days in the history of American soccer'

MLS Commissioner Don Garber on the signing of Freddy Adu

Jump to it...Sebastien Squillaci puts PSV Eindhoven keeper Ronald Waterreus under pressure during the 1-1 Champions League draw in Monaco

Monte Carlo rally

After their financial crash, the Monegasques are now motoring at home and in Europe. Nick Bidwell reports

WITH HIS TEAM in the ascendancy domestically and creating Champions League history with their recent 8-3 hammering of Deportivo La Coruna, Didier Deschamps is undeniably making a good fist of his first coaching post.

But the transition from commanding midfielder for France and Juventus to club boss was not at all straightforward. Deschamps will certainly not want to be reminded of his inaugural season at the Monaco helm. His experience as captain of France's World Cup and European Championship-winning teams counted for little as the Monegasques went into freefall in the 2001-02 campaign. They ended an abject 15th in the League, their worst performance for over 25 years.

Critics who felt Deschamps was out of his depth had all the ammunition they needed. Constantly changing tactics left the team bewildered, players were regularly shoe-horned into unfamiliar positions, and the coach's man-management skills left much to be desired as he fell out spectacularly with forwards Marco Simone and German Oliver Bierhoff, Argentinian playmaker Marcelo Gallardo and Italian defender Christian Panucci.

'Many saw the sack looming for Deschamps ...but the Monaco directors have a long tradition of standing by their man'

Given Deschamps' fraught working relationship with then president Jean-Louis Campora, many saw the sack looming. However, unlike the trigger-happy boards at Marseille and Paris Saint-Germain, the Monaco directors have a long tradition of standing by their man.

It proved a sensible move. Deschamps pinpointed where he had erred and set about establishing a new modus operandi. ▶

High-flier...Didier Deschamps

THE COACH

Didier DESCHAMPS
15.10.66. No player in French football has gleaned as many honours as the Basque-born midfielder. Skippered France to victory at World Cup 98 and Euro 2000 and won 103 caps, the Champions League with Marseille (1993) and Juventus (1996), and three Serie A titles (Juventus 1995, 1997, 1998). Also played for Nantes, Chelsea and Valencia before being appointed Monaco coach in 2001. At 37, he is the First Division's youngest boss.

GOALKEEPERS

Flavio ROMA (Ita)
21.06.74. Bought in summer 2001 from Piacenza, he is a model of consistency. Sidelined for a large part of 2002 after a shoulder operation. Started with Lazio before spells with Mantova, Venezia, Foggia and Chievo.

Tony SYLVA (Sen)
17.05.75. It is uncertain how long the Senegal international is prepared to play second fiddle to Roma, especially after his profile was raised by the 2002 World Cup. With Monaco since 1995.

DEFENDERS

Hassan EL-FAKHIRI (Nor)
18.04.77. Enterprising, skilful right-back from a multinational background. Born in Morocco to a Pakistani father but moved to Norway as a youngster. Joined Monaco in 2001 from Brann Bergen. Has also played for Lyn Oslo and Rosenborg.

Patrice EVRA
15.05.81. Senegal-born but now a naturalised Frenchman, he left one cash-strapped club, promoted Nice, for another when joining Monaco at the start of last season. Initially unhappy to be switched from midfield to left-back but found his feet in his new role and is shaping up to be the long-term replacement for Bixente Lizarazu in the national side.

Gael GIVET
09.10.81. Highly-promising young defender who made his name in the French Under-18 side that won the 2000 European Championship. With Monaco from 14, he is normally used at full-back, but probably better in the centre.

Hugo IBARRA (Arg)
01.04.74. Argentinian right-back or right-sided midfielder on loan for the season from Boca Juniors. Excellent going forward. Began with Colon Santa Fe and has also played for FC Porto.

New role...Patrice Evra

Josef Dayo OSHADOGAN (Ita)
27.06.76. Former Italy Under-21 player brought in the summer from Serie B side Cosenza to provide cover in central defence and at right-back. But he faces a long haul back to fitness after tearing knee ligaments.

Julien RODRIGUEZ
11.06.78. Uncompromising central defender and one of the surprise success stories of 2002-03. A graduate of Monaco's youth team, he had become used to sitting on the bench. But Deschamps saw something he liked and Rodriguez responded with a season of headlining performances.

Impact...Ludovic Giuly

Sebastien SQUILLACI
11.08.80. After a highly-successful two-year stint on loan with Ajaccio, he was recalled by Monaco in summer 2002 and soon made himself indispensable. The best stopper in the French top division last season and just missed out on a place in the Confederations Cup squad.

MIDFIELDERS

Lucas BERNARDI (Arg)
27.09.77. Diminutive holding midfielder with high energy levels and a great fighting spirit, as well as an ability to use the ball well. Started with Newell's Old Boys in his native Argentina and had a short spell with Marseille before joining Monaco in summer 2001.

Edouard CISSE
30.03.78. Unconvincing at Paris Saint-Germain and on loan at West Ham, but another loan move seems to have brought out the best in him. A ball-winner but has also scored vital Champions League goals.

Ludovic GIULY
10.07.76. This gifted player has come back with a bang since missing most of the 2001-02 season with a knee injury and has also got back into the national squad. Monaco's captain, signed from hometown club Lyon in 1998.

Jaroslav PLASIL (Cze)
05.01.82. Toughened up by a loan spell with Second Division Creteil, the Czech Under-21 has been in electrifying form since returning to Monaco in the summer. Able to play on either flank or in the middle.

Jerome ROTHEN
31.03.78. Arguably the one player Monaco cannot do without. Bought for £3m from Troyes midway through the 2001-02 season, he is a strong runner on the left flank and a superb crosser. Called up to the France squad earlier this year, making his full debut in the Euro 2004 qualifier against Malta.

Akis ZIKOS (Gre)
01.06.74. Defensive midfielder who settled in quickly after arriving on a free from AEK Athens in summer 2002. A tactically aware and consistent ball-winner, but he missed the second half of last season with ruptured knee ligaments. Now recovered but still not quite firing at 100 per cent.

FORWARDS

Emmanuel ADEBAYOR (Tog)
26.02.84. Youngster with more than a passing resemblance in physique and style to Arsenal and Nigeria's Nwankwo Kanu. A key figure in Metz's promotion last season and turned down Italian clubs to join Monaco in August.

Souleymane CAMARA (Sen)
22.12.82. Broke into the first team in the 2001-02 season and secured a spot in Senegal's World Cup squad but has now slipped to fourth-choice striker. A product of the club's Dakar academy.

Fernando MORIENTES (Spa)
05.04.76. Spain striker drafted in as a replacement for long-term injury victim Shabani Nonda on a year-long loan from Real Madrid. Strong in the air.

Shabani NONDA (DRC)
06.03.77. Topped the French goal chart last term with 26, and rejected a big-bucks offer from Lyon. But cruciate ligament damage has put him out for the season. Played for Zurich and Rennes before joining Monaco in 2000.

Goal glut...Dado Prso

Dado PRSO (Cro)
05.11.74. Man of the moment after scoring four goals in the 8-3 Champions League demolition of Deportivo. Joined Monaco from Ajaccio in 1999 but only a first-team regular since last season.

Strong man of the left...Jerome Rothen

He settled on a fluid 4-4-2 system, cast aside those he considered disruptive influences – Simone, Panucci and Bierhoff were shipped out to Italy; Gallardo was largely confined to the bench – and, vitally, brought in former Monaco captains Jean Petit and Jean-Luc Ettori as his assistants.

Their appointments were masterstrokes. Not only could they share their intimate knowledge of Monaco with the rookie boss, but they would also ease Deschamps' gargantuan workload. In his highly-disappointing early days at Monaco, the coach had regarded delegation as a dirty word, overdosing on the heavy hand of authority. Petit and Ettori now act as the ideal buffer, and Deschamps no longer risks being sidetracked by petty squabbles.

Appropriately for the youngest coach in the French top flight, Deschamps also had the courage to rebuild his back four with relatively inexperienced newcomers. After a loan spell with Ajaccio, Sebastien Squillaci was paired in central defence with Julien Rodriguez, Patrice Evra arrived from Cote d'Azur neighbours Nice to play at left-back, while Morocco-born Hassan El-Fakhiri and the fast-improving Gael Givet shared the other full-back position. All have performed more than capably, with Squillaci and Evra even making it to the fringes of the senior France squad.

While the club's cash-flow difficulties worsened, the foundations were in place for an on-pitch revival. Led by the attacking triumvirate of busy, incisive wide midfielders Ludovic Giuly (right) and Jerome Rothen (left) and DR Congo striker Shabani Nonda, the Monegasques came within a point of pipping Lyon to the championship last season and won the League Cup. Not only that, but they did it playing the most attractive football of any side in the country.

No place like home...Monaco's imposing Stade Louis II

"When he was first appointed by Monaco, Didier probably wasn't quite ready for everything the job entailed," says Petit. "He was thrown in at the deep end. But he's a quick learner and didn't repeat the errors he initially made. Tactically, he's outstanding. He has good football instincts, he quickly judges situations and knows how to outsmart opponents.

"For him, a player must always demand the ball. He insists on lots of intelligent running off the ball, technique, fighting spirit and disciplined defending. I think he has been influenced by all the great coaches he has played under: Aime Jacquet with France, Juventus' Marcello Lippi, Raymond Goethals at Marseille, Jean-Claude Suaudeau at Nantes. In my opinion, he is a combination of the seriousness of Juve and the clever movement of Nantes."

Deschamps also shares the insatiable desire of his past masters. Despite leading Monaco to Champions League qualification last season, his end-of-term report was mainly of the 'could do better' variety. The side had lost too many points through lapses of concentration and a recurrent failure to kill off inferior opponents.

The improvement this term is there for all to see. Monaco have gained consistency and self-assurance, and that despite losing Nonda for the season after he suffered a cruciate ligament injury in the summer.

Late-developing Croat forward Dado Prso (see profile, page 46) has continued his excellent form of last term, as have the irrepressible Giuly and Rothen. Defensively, the team have been solid, and the four latest additions to the squad have all looked the part.

Unwanted Real Madrid striker Fernando Morientes has filled in superbly for Nonda since arriving on a season-long loan; exciting young Czech midfield prospect Jaroslav Plasil – who was farmed out to Second Division Creteil last season – has forced his way into the first team with a string of energetic and skilful displays; ex-Metz striker Emmanuel Adebayor has shown bags of potential; and defensive midfielder Edouard Cisse has been a revelation, light years from the anonymous figure who had lost his way in recent years at Paris Saint-Germain and West Ham.

Monaco, once thought of as a soft touch physically, a loose group of technically refined players who would not always go the extra mile for a win, today have more than a sliver of resilience in their soul. And not merely because they have the template of all-time great midfield grafter Deschamps to copy.

Monaco's well-documented economic problems have also played their part in bringing the players closer together. When the French League demoted the heavily-endebted club – reportedly £63 million in the red – to the Second Division last summer, a mass exodus of talent was expected. But the likes of Nonda, Rothen, Giuly and Italian keeper Flavio Roma showed solidarity by opting to stay on; Mexican central defender Rafael Marquez (to Barcelona) and Gallardo (River Plate) were the only notable departures.

The Monegasques then successfully appealed against their relegation following a £34m cash injection from Monte Carlo businessmen and thoughts could again

turn to lofty ambitions both at home and abroad.

"As a group we want to achieve so much more," says Rothen. "Hopefully, second place in the championship and the League Cup is only the start. We will be disappointed if we aren't champions this season and we know we can look after ourselves in the Champions League as well.

"This is a young group and a hungry one. Despite all the problems off the pitch, we have stuck together, and that's very important. A good team is one that has a great spirit, and that's what we have. Now that our economic situation has been cleared up, we can only go forward. We are focused, determined and unified."

Monaco will need to be all those things and more if they are to stave off accusations that they enjoy an unfair advantage due to Monte Carlo's special tax rules.

Marseille president Christophe Bouchet and his counterparts at Lyon and Lens, Jean-Michel Aulas and Gervais Martel, claim the principality's ability to offer tax-free salaries to non-French citizens makes it easier for Monaco to attract star foreign players.

The trio are apparently hell-bent on redress, and should they fail to wring tax concessions of their own from the government – which is likely – they have suggested that the supposed imbalance be righted by scrapping the Monte Carlo club's TV payments or forcing them to pay an entry fee to the French League.

'Yes, we have certain tax advantages but we've always played the game. Lord Aulas, Bouchet and their underlings are trying to destabilise us because we are doing well'

Monaco president Pierre Svara

Monaco have competed in the French League for over five decades and produced over 50 internationals for *Les Bleus* – including current stars Thierry Henry, David Trezeguet and Lilian Thuram. But Bouchet prefers to see the club as interlopers, pointing out that as an economically and politically independent state they are, strictly speaking, not French.

"We are not playing to the same rules as Monaco," claims Bouchet. "It's an incredible injustice. Apart from the tax question, Monaco take a place in European competitions from other French clubs. The likes of Marseille, Lyon, Lens, Bordeaux, Nantes or Auxerre pay the price. UEFA should award an independent berth to Monaco in club competitions."

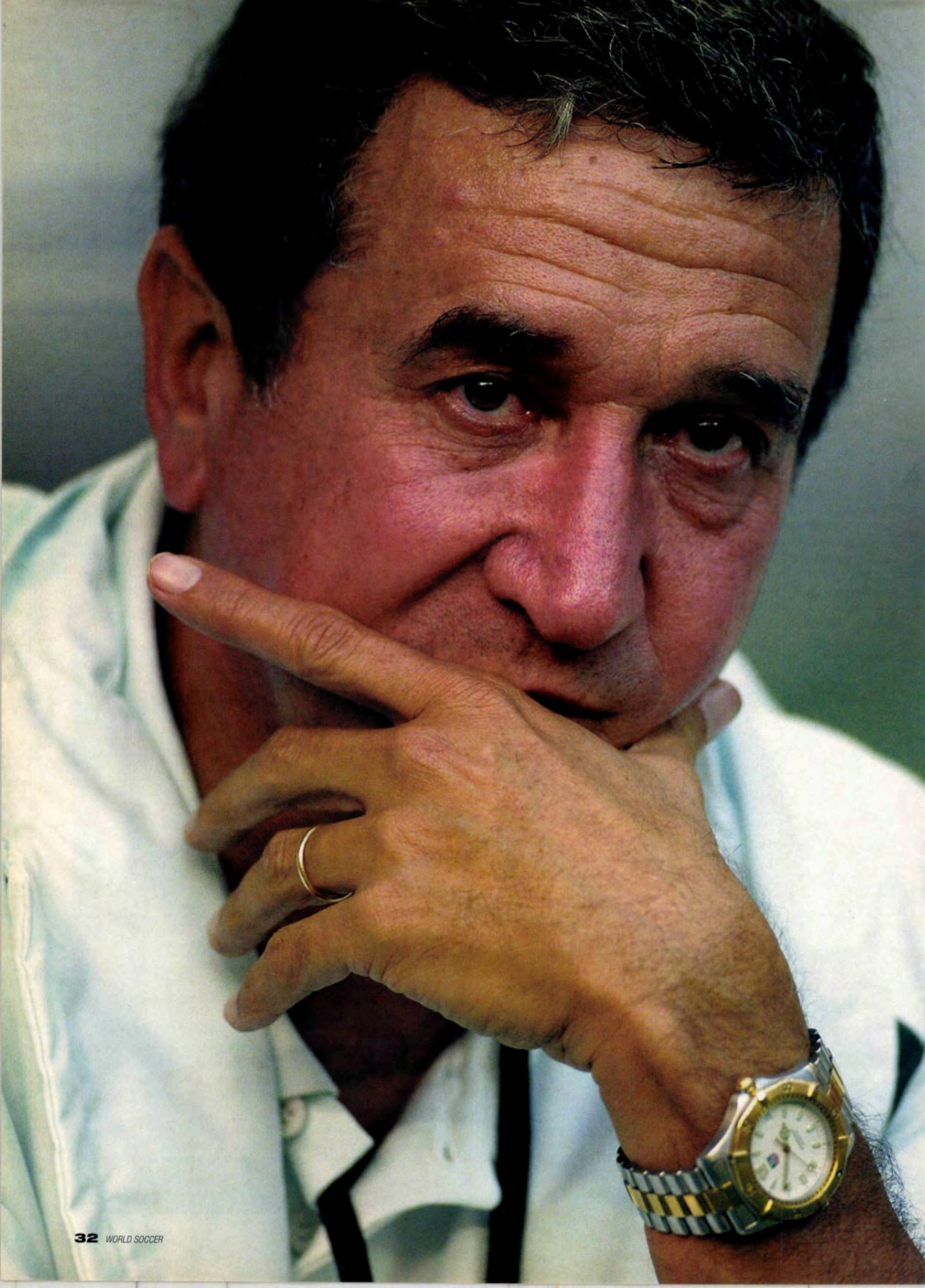
But for Monaco president Pierre Svara, who took over from Campora this summer, the complaints are only emerging now out of envy. "Monaco's taxation regime did not seem to bother other clubs when we were 15th in the table," he says. "The Bosman ruling came into effect seven years ago and this matter had not been brought up before. Lord Aulas, Bouchet and their underlings are trying to destabilise us at a time when we are doing well. You would think we haven't done anything for French football. I know we have made an important contribution.

"It's a well-known fact that we have certain tax advantages. But we've always played the game. We are not on a pedestal. If we are so privileged fiscally, why do we have many Frenchmen in our side and Marseille field a team of foreigners?

"All this started when Fernando Morientes signed for us in preference to Lyon. I note that Lyon then went out and bought Giovane Elber from Bayern Munich. We were interested in him at one point, too, but despite our tax regime, he was too expensive for us. The Lyon coffers must be in good shape."

As the sound and fury intensifies, the League has no choice but to examine the Monaco question. These are interesting times on and off the pitch in Monte Carlo.

Paper chase...Monegasques get behind their team



Carry on ruling

The Brazil coach tells Pedro Redig why his country will continue to dominate world football

WORLD SOCCER: What is it like to be the manager of the best team in the world?
CARLOS ALBERTO PARREIRA: It is always a great responsibility, and being in charge of the team who are five-times world champions makes this responsibility even bigger. You think you have reached the top and you don't have to make any more effort, that you don't need to learn, that everything is sorted because you are the best. But in reality things are not that simple. In the world of business, individual and team sports, there are always people with hunger and ambition to succeed, people who want to be recognised and to excel, looking to improve technically and physically. In those situations, you have to be careful not to fall into the trap of success. You always have to keep yourself updated, train hard and be always on the top. I say to my players: "Look, we already are the best, so we have to aim for excellence now."

What can you teach players like Ronaldo, Roberto Carlos, Ronaldinho and Cafu?
Neither I nor anybody else has anything to teach to those players. Our main responsibility here is to make them contribute to the team. If you can integrate those individuals to work as a group you are heading in the right direction.

The World Cup-winning team of 2002 will naturally change by 2006. At what stage is this process now?
When I took over on January 6, 2003, only six months after Brazil had won the World Cup, people were already demanding changes. But to change what? The team that has just been crowned champions half a year ago? I said at the time: "Look, Argentina and France, both eliminated in the first stage, Italy, England...they are the ones who need to try something different. Not Brazil!"

Brazil won their fifth world title in brilliant fashion. What we have to do is to keep the core of this team, which fortunately will still be young enough to get to the next World Cup, and to benefit from this experience, making only small modifications. For sure, we will not go to the 2006 World Cup with the same team as in 2002. A few changes will be made. Some players will underperform, others will progress, fight for a place and win it.

What benefit can a friendly like the one against Jamaica in England in October bring to a squad without anything else to prove?
Ah, but that's the point. A match against Jamaica does not represent a major challenge for the five-times world champions [Brazil won 1-0]. But if you see it as part of the preparation for the qualifying and finals of the 2006 World Cup, it is an important friendly. So, all we have to do is change the focus, then the match can be seen as quite relevant.

Why do Brazilians set so much store by friendlies, while countries like England show their appreciation for this type of game by changing the whole team in the second half?
What motivates us is the prestige of being part of the team that won a fifth World Cup for Brazil. That identifies and bonds this group. If you put our third team out to play a friendly and they lose, tomorrow people won't say it was the country's third team that lost. They will say: "The Brazilian national team that won the World Cup lost to Jamaica."

How do you feel about FIFA's decision not to allow players to travel for matches outside the continent where they are based unless they are World Cup qualifiers?
FIFA's intention is to protect the clubs, the players' health and integrity. The decision was made after Brazil's 0-0 draw against China in February, in Guangzhou. It was really one of the worst trips of my life: more than 30 hours in a plane going there, another 30 coming back, 13 hours' time difference. You arrive there and you are going to play like zombies against the Chinese, who have prepared for 40 days. Brazil were disappointing because they did not win [it was a 0-0 draw], but we know why it did not happen. We could have even lost because we did not have the minimum conditions to play.

The FIFA ruling forces Brazil to play friendlies in Europe unless they don't want to use their best players. Are you happy about that?
On one hand, yes; on the other, no, because the Brazilian fan will no longer be able to watch the national team in action at home.

What do the fans have to say?
The supporters feel it is strange, they criticise and question it. But the fact is that the national side have become a very expensive commodity. The Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) charges around £600,000 for a match. Add on the television deal, air tickets, hotel and other expenses and the conclusion is that there is nobody in Brazil who can afford it. So, it became expensive and impossible to play in our own country, apart from in the World Cup qualifiers.

At the same time, it is good business to play in Europe, in a packed stadium, with tickets at a much better price than in the depressed Brazilian market and with good international media exposure.
Yes, the match against Jamaica was played in front of a full house at Leicester. It was a success, and that's the way it is going to be from now on, because it makes sense. Europe is where most of our national team players are. Seventeen are based there so it is easier and more practical to gather them all together in Europe.

Have Brazil achieved all this success only because their main stars play in Europe?
No. We are the best team in the world because of the quality of the Brazilian players, who I believe are the best in the world. Coming to Europe does not make them better players, because they keep the essence of the Brazilian style. They don't lose their quality, their individual skills or technique. They learn to play with a more collective attitude and to put their individuality to the benefit of the team. As a consequence of the superior organisation, they will also get more disciplined. But the key point is the player's ability.

'We are not the best team in the world just because our stars play in Europe'

As a game, Brazilian football would be inferior to Europe's, but individually, are our players better?
In terms of organisation and structure, yes, the European clubs are much better. But the game itself is different and hard to compare. Brazilian football is played from January to December, in the most adverse climatic conditions. Our style is unique, we 'like' the ball. European soccer is based on speed, marking and a lot of fighting for the ball, but it lacks sometimes in creativity and technique. It is more to do with raw power and

speed; in Brazil we do not emphasise marking or rushing so much, but have quality in abundance. We treat the ball better, we keep more possession. I prefer our style of football.

Would South American teams do well if they could play more often against the big European clubs?

I believe so. Soccer's great commodity is technique. This is something that, thank God, we will always have plenty of in South America, especially in Brazil. Football, fortunately, is not a sport of velocity and strength; it should be more based on technique, creativity and even some artistic quality. Speed and power are important elements but they are not the foundations. That's why we will always have an advantage. That's the reason why Europeans spend millions buying Brazilian, Argentinian and Uruguayan players.

The most recent example is Kaka, who, in only a few months, has been a huge success at Milan.

True, but Kaka is not a better player because he went to Milan; he was already good. He has been in the spotlight for at least four years in Brazil, since he was 18. But playing for a big club, for the current European champions, with all the organisation and infrastructure, surrounded by some of the best players in the world, can only encourage a player to perform better. Kaka is making a big impact and his reputation will only grow.

What can be done to stop this exodus? Could Diego of Santos be the next in line?

It would be better if Diego and players like him could stay in Brazil. We are losing our reference points: in the Brazilian national team, the technical staff travel to meet the players, while before it used to be the other way around. Only idols can create a generation of followers. They fill the stadiums and bring passion to the people. Now when they start to appear, just when an identification between player, club and fans begins to materialise, the player is sold abroad. You invest in another player and soon he is also gone. It is an unstoppable process and one that is not good for us. A solution would only come if Brazil's economic situation changed, because at the moment we cannot compete in football terms with Europe's superior buying power. Our football will only be rich when our country gets rich.

Would retaining the World Cup in 2006 in Germany be more difficult for you than your triumph in the 1994 tournament?

I think so. It is a great challenge because a non-European team has only once won the World Cup in Europe – Brazil in Sweden in 1958. Germany, without a great side, not brilliant at all, reached the 2002 Final more because of the charisma and tradition of their shirt, their past history as three-times winners. Playing at home in 2006, they will be the hardest opponents to beat, not only for Brazil but for all other nations. Our biggest challenge is to try to win our second World Cup in Europe.

Does being defending champions make the job harder or easier?

It is harder every time. We can see other teams' motivation every time they play against us, the world champions. Jamaica, China, anyone who faces Brazil plays the game of their lives. For them, beating us is like winning their World Cup Final and that gives them extra incentive. So, everybody else will be trying to block us from winning for the sixth time. It will be all the rest against us, I have no doubt about it.

What about the other main contenders, your traditional rivals such as Argentina, Italy and France?

When you follow the game for such a long time you are aware things can look pretty much the same. But you must never forget that surprises happen, like at the last World Cup with the USA, Korea, Japan and Turkey. The Turks are an emerging force but they still need another World Cup to confirm their pedigree. In a recent article, I argued football's geography should not be altered because of what happened at the last World Cup. If those countries repeat their performances, then we can say the map could be redrawn.

How do you feel about the champions having to qualify for the first time?

Winning a World Cup is such a memorable, difficult and complicated achievement that the champions should win the prize of a guaranteed place in the following one.

Some people argue that Brazil failed in 1998 and France in 2002 because they lacked the competitive edge from not playing qualifying matches.

I don't agree. If you are contesting competitive matches, you can achieve a better preparation and make a more precise evaluation of your players. But being pre-qualified means making less effort, getting less tired and risking fewer injuries in all the matches before the finals. Each of the 10 countries play 18 times in the South American qualifying format. With players arriving in a hurry from Europe, you cannot be brilliant in all of them. So there would be some strain for the team and staff, and this could be avoided if we did not have to qualify. To me, it is more difficult, but as it is the first time, we cannot say if it would be better or not.

Are money and commercialism changing the game for better or for worse?

Football is inundated with money. But if you compare the earnings of the biggest football stars with the top basketball stars, the top Formula One drivers or golfers, the Beckhams and Ronaldos do not earn that much. We are talking about only one or two in a game played by millions. No sport can survive without television and the income it brings. Commercialism generates benefits, but the riches are still not well distributed and the money could and should be better channelled.

For how long can Brazil dominate the international game?

For as long as we want to – because we have all the conditions for it. First of all, for any team to achieve success at Olympic level and on the world stage the sport must be played widely within the country, you need a lot of people practising – and in Brazil, everybody wants to play football. The old story that the game is mainly played by the poor is over. Today, the best way for climbing the social ladder is through sport, especially for the underprivileged, so football is the quickest way to reach success. But now middle-class children and everybody else are playing football.

Ronaldo, who came from a modest background, and Kaka, from a wealthier family, are two examples of that.

Yes, and the myth that players only come from the *favelas*, from the streets, is finished. They are all bred in clubs now. At eight or nine years old they are already in the academies. They even have the 'nappy' category for children up to six and seven years. There are a total of six levels until they get to the junior team. This happens from the Amazon all the way to the south of Brazil. The big advantage in relation to other sports, where you need a court, is that football can be played in the rough, improvising two rocks as goalposts, with a ball made of rubber, played in bare feet, without a shirt – so these are positive aspects. The rules are also universal. You go to New Zealand, to Fiji, and people know the rules of football because they are simple. I think that we will dominate football as the biggest sport in the world, even with all this migration of players.

What future do you see for the game?

This love story has lasted for more than 100 years now. There are peculiarities that make football this 'fatal attraction', delighting people in a way no other sport does. Soccer is the only sport where you have an infinite amount of movements, always a different gesture. One goal is never like another, it is always unique. In basketball, you watch a three-pointer and it is usually the same, in volleyball as well. There is minimum variation, while in football you can pick 1,000 goals and each of them has a different conception. So you never get tired.

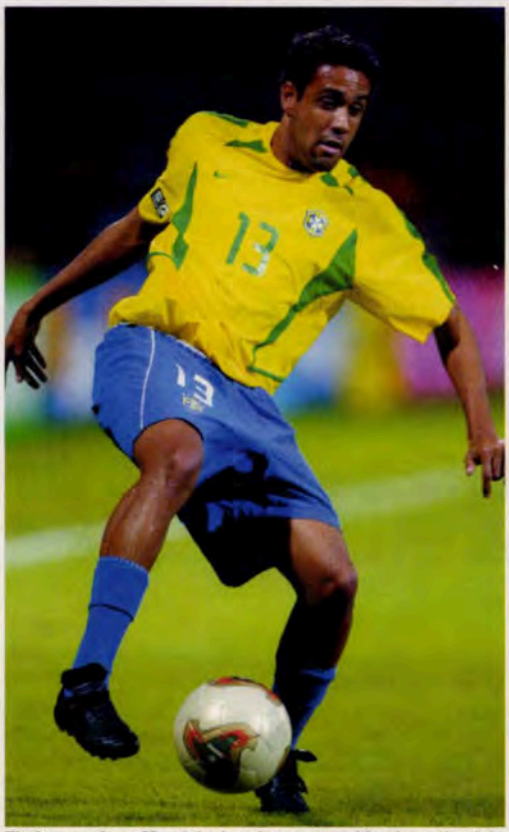
Then there is the passion of the supporters, and the other factors that can be decisive like the heat, cold, wind, rain, a heavy pitch, a penalty, a mistake. Football is always associated with controversy. Take, for instance, the offside rule, something I find marvellous. If they finished with it one day, it would change the essence of the game. The rules of other sports have to be constantly modified. They do it every 10 years because it gets boring. You don't need to do that with football.

Some players score with a back-heel, others with the belly or knee, head, chest, back, from a corner, from a free-kick, goals in so many different forms. So, we are talking about something really artistic, mixed with very human elements – passion and love. This identification and this attraction we have for the ball is something unquestionable. In the old days, they worshipped the sun, the moon, a round form – the shape of a ball. This game is so full of irresistible attractions that its magic will never end.

BRAZIL – THE NEXT GENERATION
10 players for 2006

Brazil nearly missed out on last year's World Cup after losing six of their nine away qualifiers. It helps explain why coach Parreira is going with experience at the start of the current campaign.

Slowly, he will build a side good enough for the demands of 2006. It is far too early to predict Brazil's World Cup team – there is so much time for new stars to emerge. But these are some of the players currently knocking on the door.


Tireless worker...Maurinho is a dangerous raider down the right

FABIO
Club: Vasco da Gama
Born: 30.09.80
Uncapped
Appears to be behind Flamengo's Julio Cesar in the pecking order, but is a far superior keeper. Calm and athletic, he has almost single-handedly saved his club from relegation. Was in this year's Confederations Cup squad.

MAURINHO
Cruzeiro
11.10.78
2 caps
Won the Brazilian title with Santos last year and seems set for a repeat this season with Cruzeiro. Attacking right-back with formidable lung power. Played in the Confederations Cup.

ALEX
Santos
17.06.82
Uncapped
Powerfully-built centre-back, occasionally cumbersome but frequently commanding. Under-23 international who may soon get a chance to solve the senior side's problems defending against the high ball.

DUDU CEARENSE
Vitoria
15.04.83
Uncapped
Lanky midfielder taken to the Confederations Cup for experience. Parreira describes him as "an exceptional talent with elegance and personality". His excellent range of passing could make him an interesting long-term option for the holding role.

RENATO
Santos
15.05.79
4 caps
The unsung hero of Santos. Wins the ball cleanly, passes sensibly, runs all day and can also score. Putting in a bid for the right-sided midfield slot.

DIEGO
Santos
28.02.85
2 caps
Midfield organiser of astonishing maturity who looks a junior Zidane in the making. Has a low centre of gravity, a strong personality, exceptional passing skills...and the confidence of Parreira.

ALEX
Cruzeiro
14.09.77
31 caps (9 goals)
Still an enigma over five years after his Brazil debut. A playmaker with a quick mind and a gloriously subtle left foot and the outstanding player of the domestic season as Cruzeiro move towards the title. But he has yet to prove he can be a dominant international force. An extended run in the team might help him but he perhaps lacks speed and strength.

Santos starlets...Diego (left) and Robinho

ROBINHO
Santos
25.01.84
Uncapped
Much-hyped left-winger at his most dangerous cutting in on his right foot. Suffered once opponents started blocking the route inside, but is adding hard work and tactical sense to natural talent. Some favour him in Ze Roberto's slot on the left of midfield.

Find of the season...Nilmar (left) has been compared to Bebeto

NILMAR
Internacional
14.07.84
Uncapped
The find of the year, a striker with a touch of Bebeto about him. Shows tight dribbling skills, confident shooting and, despite his slight physique, is comfortable with his back to goal. An Under-23 international.

LUIS FABIANO
Sao Paulo
08.11.80
3 caps (1 goal)
Striker who gives headaches to defenders and referees alike. Pace, power and excellent finishing have got him into the squad, but he will have to curb the excesses of a wild temperament to stay there.

Tim Vickery

Revival of the fittest

Gavin Hamilton talks to the coach who is rebuilding his reputation with Fenerbahce in Turkey after sex and drugs scandals in Germany

WORLD SOCCER: What's the difference between coaching in Germany and Turkey?
CHRISTOPH DAUM: Turkish players have more emotion, more feelings. It starts with the way they say hello – they kiss. If you keep your distance, the player will say: "He doesn't like me!" If you talk about mistakes they get upset. It's much better to talk about the good things. In Germany, we criticise teams and players much more and the players understand criticism. Here, you have to tell them to think about the result. Mental quickness has improved, the players are ready to learn, they ask about all sorts of detail. They want to be better. In Germany, they think they know everything.

How do you find the media?
In Europe, especially in England and Turkey, the media write in a very provocative way, it affects the players. If the media cooled down, it might help the atmosphere in the stadium! You have to consider the history of the Turkish media. It used to be controlled by the government. Then, in 1986, the whole country was released, and the free press became a problem. They have gone overboard. Only 30 per cent of the journalists are good and go into issues deeply. The rest really don't have an education. When I came, if you had a camera, you became a journalist. They think that if they publish a picture of themselves with me, they can write what they want.

Does that make life difficult?
Here, you have zero privacy. As in England with some papers, they don't respect privacy. You must be prepared for it. You're in the public eye. I don't have a private life. This time, I don't want there to be rumours, so I don't go out to restaurants. Then people say: "Why don't you enjoy our fabulous nightlife?" We have 10 TV channels with five, six hours every day about football. How do you fill five hours? Then there are 10 papers. Each fills three pages on the big three clubs.

Does Turkey still need foreign coaches?
After Fatih Terim took Turkey to Euro 96, their first finals since 1954, the clubs all employed Turkish coaches, they thought they knew everything by themselves. We have some very good Turkish coaches – for example, I like the coach of Genclerbirligi, Kazim Ersun Yanal; he could have big success at international level. But the foreign coaches bring experience – I have been in charge in 100 European matches.

'I was made out to be the biggest traitor in Germany. It was totally unbelievable'

What problems have you met in Turkey?
The same as in other countries – you have to get results, you have to look after the talented players. But here in Turkey, football is everything; without it, there is nothing. You have to adapt. You can't make them speak German! If you come in as the Big Boss, say that you know everything and they are stupid, you will lose them. You have to understand this country. You have to make a real partnership. Sometimes I have to moderate my opinions, to learn from my Turkish partners.

Turkey has a lot of potential, but how do you go about scouting players?
It's unbelievable – everyone wants to play for Galatasaray, Fenerbahce or Besiktas. It all depends on your family. Fenerbahce is the biggest football family in Turkey. We have 20 million supporters, Galatasaray have 15 million, Besiktas 10 million. So we don't have to scout for young players – they come to us! There is no well-organised scouting structure. Worldwide, I compare Turkey to Brazil. Turkey could produce as many players as Brazil. Everyone here plays football. In Germany, children have mountain bikes, computers. In Turkey, they can't afford those things. There's only one thing to do – play football.

But it's not well-organised?
If we could organise it better, we could produce more players. It's a question of infrastructure at the smaller clubs and finding coaches who are really educated in youth coaching. That was one thing I wanted to change in Germany. The proportion of training courses in youth football was poor – about 10 per cent. Children are not small adults. Germany made so many mistakes – a lot of show but no results. There is no co-ordination. Portugal and Turkey have the greatest potential in Europe. You can find talented players like fruit on a tree, you just have to pick them. In Germany they stay on the tree until they go rotten. There is no enthusiasm for youth coaches. Germany needs to learn from France. They missed out on the 1990 and 1994 World Cups but did their homework and changed things.

How are your plans developing at Fenerbahce?
We have bought a whole new team for half the cost of one player bought last season [Ariel Ortega]. We paid nothing for Luciano, a little to Feyenoord

Daum in blunderland...the controversial game against Leeds

LIFE & TIMES Christoph Daum

- Born October 10, 1953.
- Began coaching career with Koln youth team and worked his way up to become club head coach in 1986.
- Guided Stuttgart to the 1991-92 Bundesliga title, but blundered by fielding four foreigners (only three were allowed) in a European Cup game against Leeds United. UEFA ordered a rematch, which Stuttgart lost 2-1.
- Spent two seasons in charge of Besiktas, winning the Turkish League and Cup, before returning to Germany in 1996 to mastermind the revival of Bayer Leverkusen.
- After three second-place finishes in four years, Daum was earmarked to take over as Germany's national coach in June 2001 but was hit by accusations in German tabloids of drug abuse and wild sex parties. Bayern Munich general manager Uli Hoeness led the calls for Daum to quit, saying if the

for Pierre [Van Hooijdonk]; the biggest signing was Tuncay from Denizlispor. We have a lot of Under-21 players, we have released older players like Abdullah – though he is still a very good player – and we're building a young team for the future. I want to achieve success in Europe with Fenerbahce, a European title by 2007, the club's centenary.

Do you have unfinished business in Germany?

There are so many things for me to do in Turkey. Turkey is behind me. In Germany, only the ordinary people were behind me. People killed me without knowing the real facts. I made a mistake – not that it was OK – but the price I had to pay was too high. It was unbelievable how they treated me. I had no chance. People told me: "They are making an example of you." But the public were always on my side.

So you plan to stay in Turkey?

In Germany I lived in an industrial area, I grew up with Turks. Turkey is my second home. I'm happy to give a little bit of my experience to Turkish football. I would never say no, I won't go back, but at the moment it's not my priority. I've had offers from Russia, Ukraine and Germany but I have something to fulfil here in Turkey. I don't have to prove my qualities, because of my past in Germany, with Besiktas, and in Austria.

How do you reflect on the way the sex and drugs allegations forced you out of Germany?

All the stories started when I was appointed national coach. Everything was coming from Munich. Forget it, I don't have to give anything to Germany. I gave everything back to football. I did a lot of charity things. But they made me out to be the biggest traitor in Germany. It would be totally impossible to go back while they [Uli Hoeness and Karl-Heinz Rummenigge] are still in charge at Bayern. It was going to be a revolution. I wanted there to be a new national training centre in Cologne; now it's been built in Munich. If it had been built in Cologne, it would have shifted power to the west [and away from Munich in the south].

Do you have ambitions to be Turkey's national coach?

No, I have far too much to do at Fenerbahce, it's taking 25 hours of the day. But I will never be a complete coach – 30 per cent of my time is taken up with the media and promotions. All these sponsors, TV shows – they take all your energy.

allegations were true, he was unfit to hold the national team job. Daum submitted a sample of hair for examination by a university laboratory. On October 21, 2000, it was revealed to contain traces of cocaine. Sacked by Leverkusen, Daum fled to Florida to escape the media circus.

- Began his rehabilitation by taking charge of Austria Wien in autumn 2002, guiding them to the 2003 League title.
- Returned to Turkey, to Fenerbahce, in summer 2003.

Welcome to Turkey...Daum greets the Fenerbahce crowd

Chelsea, Claude, Beckham and me

Real Madrid's fearless right-back talks exclusively to Sid Lowe

WORLD SOCCER: You've signed a new contract at Real Madrid. Why didn't you go to Chelsea?
MICHEL SALGADO: Chelsea were very keen, as were others from England and Italy, and that fills me with pride, but my preference was always to stay. There were things in the balance, of course: experiencing England was a very attractive option. But at Madrid I've got a certain place within the club and among my team-mates. It would have been very hard to lose that.

You were close to leaving, though.
Yes. At one stage my position and that of the club were some way apart. But the club's determination for me to stay was maybe greater than I thought and that was fundamental.

You speak English, don't you?
Yes, but it's easier for me to read than speak.

So you could have settled quickly in England.
Right from the start my decision was England or Madrid – I ruled out Italy. But not for the language, for the league. English football really attracted me, it's direct, there are lots of goals, everyone plays to win, it's great to watch. The fans are exceptional. Whenever I play in England I enjoy the atmosphere so much. Our stadiums are very cold in comparison. Over here, people go to the football as if they were going to the theatre.

Your bargaining position was strong because you've had a fabulous couple of years. But it's been tough away from the pitch. Your parents passed away...
It's very hard to lose your parents because you're never, ever prepared for it, you never adapt and you always miss them. They are the mirror in which you see yourself; they are what you are. But I try to think positively and in the same year my daughter was born. It's almost a balance, departures and arrivals – that's the way life is. I would love them to still be here to enjoy being with their granddaughter, but at least they did meet her. I've tried to make sure that it has not affected my performances and I feel I have succeeded.

Some are calling you the best right-back in the world.
No. I appreciate people saying that but everyone has their ideal player. Ask a million people what qualities the perfect right-back has and you'll get a million answers

So what qualities do you have?
Above all, consistency. I also try to learn every day. If you don't push yourself, you end up stagnating, going backwards.

Steve McManaman said you were the hardest man he had ever met.
Maybe. But hard in the sense of never giving up, always being there, being a pain in the backside for opponents. Naturally, I'm quite physically strong, too, and I try to maintain that.

That strength would have helped if you'd gone to England.
Let's not confuse things here. People say English football is rougher. But I've played against English teams and they have a very high technical level. Just as people say all Italian teams are defensive...well, no. People insist that everything we do in Spain, we do best. No. Whenever I've played against English teams, they've been spectacular games. That's the reality.

Do you miss McManaman?
Yes. He was one of the best-loved in our dressing-room. He has a philosophy of life that I love, he's always happy. As a footballer, too, right up to his very last minute at Madrid, every time he came on he was a key player.

There were 11 departures this summer. Isn't Madrid's squad rather short?
The club has opted for a policy that is very defined: buy one 'key' player, as they call them, and get everyone else from the youth team. But kids can't turn into great players overnight. So perhaps if some of the young players are not yet complete, the squad looks short.

What of the club's 'Zidanes and Pavons' policy, mixing superstars with journeymen? Does it not risk the extinction of the 'middle-ranked' player?
I don't like politics, policy, or the labels that get applied, especially in football. For me, football is football. Everyone is as important as each other. What matters is that every single player knows how he can benefit the club. I don't care if it's Zidane, Pavon, me or Solari.

'I love English football but it would have been hard to lose my status at Madrid'

The victims appear to be players like Fernando Morientes, Claude Makelele and Flavio Conceicao, who all left this summer. Are they better footballers than they were allowed to appear because they didn't fit the model?
Maybe, but it's a club issue – and a complicated one. We can't really get involved, we're not going to criticise. What I will say is that there are important players who have left who would be useful for us now. But every player has to look after himself and maybe some weren't happy. Now, if we're talking about ability, then players like Morientes and McManaman should be in the squad.

What about Makelele?
He's our biggest loss. Because no matter how much people say: "Well, David Beckham's playing really well in the middle" – and David is playing superbly – I still wonder. I ask myself: "Yeah, and what if we had David and Claude?" Judgments should be made at the end of the season. To analyse us now is an error because things are going well and people say: "See, no one notices the absence of Makelele." But as soon as something goes wrong they'll say: "See how much they miss Makelele?" We can't cry about it but at the end of the season we'll see.

For all the talk of *galacticos*, two of Madrid's last three European Cups were won without Figo, Zidane or Ronaldo.
There wasn't such a difference between us and others then – or, rather, there wasn't the difference that people try to sell now. We were exceptional in the 2000 European Cup, knocking out Manchester United and Bayern Munich, and in the Final beating Valencia, who were fantastic that year. We didn't command such media attention but we were a great team.

A better team than now?
Back then, we were obliged to function more as a team. At the moment, we don't have to so much – or, more to the point, we can't because, let's say, there are five players that have to work as a team and five that you can't oblige to do so.

And when things go wrong, the defence takes the blame.
Yes, but that's a historic fact at Real Madrid. I think this defence is brilliant. Last season we had the League's fifth-best defence – and in a team built to attack. It's easy to build a team to defend and have that record – you can get seven players behind the ball. We have four, sometimes fewer. Last year, Claude gave us that balance. Or, rather, made that imbalance less noticeable.

Has Beckham surprised you?
A lot. Above all because of the speed with which he has settled. Also, we've discovered a new player. In Manchester, he had enormous media pull, took great free-kicks and delivered brilliant crosses. Now we've seen a Beckham who runs, who battles, who never backs down. He's more complete than we thought. Maybe we hadn't seen him enough.

How do you get on with him?
Very well. I speak English with him. I've taken him out with my friends and he came to my birthday party.

He's very open to new things. After he visited the Queen [to be awarded the OBE], we started calling him Sir…

From the stands you look alike.

No, he's much more handsome than me! Maybe it's the blond hair…

Who would be your European Player of the Year?

Raul, Roberto Carlos or Paolo Maldini. Maldini for everything he has achieved. Roberto Carlos because it's very difficult to be a defender and be important in every game the way he is. There's a huge difference between all the defenders in the world and Roberto Carlos. And Raul because he should have won it by now.

The press here are always demanding the award for Raul.

It's become a question of 'justice'. Each year without him winning it, the calls increase. Nobody has achieved what he has and yet nobody values him sufficiently. If Raul retires without winning the *Ballon d'Or*, it would be an aberration.

What about Thierry Henry? He is rumoured to be the next signing.

He's a great player with exceptional power. But at the moment he's a rival.

And, potentially, an important one in the Champions League. Are Madrid favourites?

People always say so, because we have the history. The favourites are Juve, Milan, us, Manchester. Then there's always a surprise: it could be Chelsea or Arsenal, like it was Valencia in 2000. Arsenal have the quality, but they're not favourites because they haven't earned that status over time, like we have.

FACT FILE

Club Real Madrid
Country Spain
Born October 22, 1975, in Pontevedra
Previous clubs Celta Vigo, Salamanca
International debut September 1998, v Cyprus
International caps 32 (0 goals)
Honours World Club Cup 2002; Champions League 2000, 2002; Spanish League 2001, 2003

For argument's sake

John Holmesdale on the challenge facing Manchester United's Dutch striker after a traumatic Euro 2004 qualifying campaign

RUUD VAN NISTELROOY has yet to play in a major tournament for Holland. Despite the goals and the accolades earned with Manchester United, the forward is still smarting from the frustration of missing Euro 2000 through injury, as well as the Dutch failure to qualify for the 2002 World Cup.

Van Nistelrooy's determination to compete on the world's biggest stages helps to explain his reaction at being substituted by coach Dick Advocaat during Holland's defeat by the Czech Republic in September's crucial Euro 2004 qualifier. He spat on the ground and kicked out at a water bottle as he left the pitch. Holland lost 3-1, a result that sent the Czechs to Portugal as group winners.

Van Nistelrooy's frustration was as much with his team-mates for underperforming in a crucial match as it was with his coach. But Advocaat still dropped him for the final group match against Moldova. It was a gesture Advocaat could afford to take because Moldova was a meaningless match: Holland were already in the play-offs.

The build-up to last month's games against Scotland was dominated by speculation of a Van Nistelrooy recall and, typically, by arguments in the Dutch camp as Holland consolidated their reputation as world leaders in picking fights with themselves.

Advocaat did little to dispel the doubts that Van Nistelrooy and Patrick Kluivert – the preferred strike partnership in the group games – could not play effectively together. "I have said that, in principle, Kluivert and Van Nistelrooy can't play together and I stand by that," Advocaat said. "Kluivert is top scorer so I go with him."

Van Nistelrooy, for his part, was busy pitching for a recall against Scotland. "I'm desperate to be back in for the play-off matches," he said. "I thought everything had been sorted out but he decided to leave me out to make an example of me.

"What happened has made me even more determined to help Holland get to the finals."

Advocaat had other attacking options, not least Bayern Munich striker Roy Makaay. But Van Nistelrooy was recalled to face Scotland in the first leg in Glasgow.

'I thought it had been sorted out but Advocaat left me out to make an example of me. It made me more determined'

The 1-0 lead gained by the home side's feisty performance did little to quell discontent among the Dutch. "It is clearly not working with Ruud and me up front and you have to wonder why we changed it like we did," said Kluivert afterwards.

"I didn't expect to be playing behind Ruud. It had not worked before so why should it suddenly work now?"

Kluivert's comments – not to mention the small matter of him being spotted at an Amsterdam rave in the early hours of Sunday morning following the first leg – forced Advocaat into a rethink. For the second leg, Kluivert was dropped and replaced by Rafael Van der Vaart.

Holland, reinvigorated by the changes – which also included the introduction of Ajax teenager Wesley Sneijder – swept aside Scotland with a breathtaking display of attacking football.

Van Nistelrooy scored a hat-trick and is now regarded as Holland's first-choice striker as they prepare for a tough group in Portugal – they face old rivals Germany in their opening group game.

They may share the same birthdate – July 1, 1976 – but it is Van Nistelrooy, not Kluivert, who now finds himself in pole position to lead the Dutch challenge in the Euro 2004 finals.

FACT FILE

Club Manchester United (Eng)
Country Holland
Born July 1, 1976, in Oss
Previous clubs Den Bosch, Heerenveen, PSV Eindhoven
International debut November 1998, v Germany
International caps 29 (14 goals)
Honours English League 2001, 2003

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We're off to Portugal...Rehhagel takes the plaudits after Greece's 1-0 win over Northern Ireland clinched first place in their Euro 2004 qualifying group

Winning the mind games

Otto Rehhagel has instilled a hard-to-beat mental attitude among his players, writes Lou Economopoulos

THE GREEK NATIONAL team are no longer second-class citizens in their own country. With the help of German coach Otto Rehhagel and the support of the federation, the squad have found themselves in the spotlight at home and in Europe by reaching the Euro 2004 finals.

Gone are the days when the side received little attention in the domestic press and few supporters turned out to see their home games. Gone, too, are the days when players would try to avoid appearing for Greece in order to preserve their energy and talents for club football. Nor do the national team have to scratch around trying to find a decent training pitch any more. The government has provided modern, high-standard facilities in a coastal suburb of Athens.

Greece unexpectedly finished top of their Euro qualifying group ahead of favourites Spain to book their place at a major finals for only the third time. Their only previous European Championship appearance came back in 1980, followed by their only World Cup trip to date, in 1994.

Despite winning their group, the team's road to Portugal was far from easy, especially after they lost their first two matches – 2-0 to Spain in Athens and by the same scoreline to Ukraine in Kiev.

"Qualifying for the Euro finals was the target we had set from the beginning," says 65-year-old Rehhagel. "As for the first two games, we hoped for a point from each but it was always on the cards we might lose, and that's what

Extra effort...Nikopolidis

Positive thinking...Karagounis

happened. But since we won the next two games, against Armenia and Northern Ireland, we felt that we could still qualify, even if we had to go through the play-offs."

Team spirit

The team did much better than that, winning their four remaining matches without conceding a goal, to finish a point clear of Spain. Indeed, the Greeks have not lost in their last 13 games.

"It has been a team effort. We've been together for two years and know each other very well," says goalkeeper Antonis Nikopolidis. Paying tribute to Rehhagel's influence, he adds: "The coach has made us into a team. He has supported the players even in difficult times, and we have returned the compliment by giving extra effort. He respects us not only as players but also as human beings."

Rehhagel, who is in his first national team post after Bundesliga-winning stints with Werder Bremen and Kaiserslautern, had to endure some rough going when he took over two years ago.

"I found out that in Greece the importance of the clubs is greater than that of the national team," he says. "So the most important task was to persuade the players that they must fight for the national team.

"The image of a country's soccer is the national team, and players have to realise doing their best for the side is worth all the hard work, since people respond to their success and celebrate it accordingly. This message has got through to the Greek players and, having achieved this big success, the national team are held in much higher esteem by the fans."

An equally important task for Rehhagel was to give a winning mentality to a group of players who had often been accused of throwing in the towel too easily.

"Greeks are emotional and want to achieve things fast, not only in soccer, but in their lives," he says. "But in a match, as in life, the same rule applies: it doesn't matter if we don't get what we want quickly, there is always time.

"I told the players that, as in the Champions League, success is a long-term target and that in matches many goals are scored in the last minute. I also pointed out to them that a successful side must have certain qualities – like team spirit."

Midfielder Giorgios Karagounis acknowledges Rehhagel's success in the psychological stakes, saying: "We feel that when we go on the field we cannot lose to anyone. We play smartly and do not give up goals, even against very good teams."

So, given that the side that won qualification showed so much mental toughness and togetherness, how likely is it that significant changes will be made to the line-up? "Changes can certainly be made," says Rehhagel, "if there is someone new who shows that he can play, or in case of injuries. But the players who earned us qualification will still form the core of the side.

Winners...Zagorakis and Karagounis

"We must bear in mind that in competitive matches our aim is to get points, not to put on a spectacle. In order to create the team's style, you must know the material you have in your hands and make your plans accordingly. There is no point in playing well if you lose. The important thing is victory."

Greece scored eight goals in the qualifying campaign, the lowest strike rate of any of the 16 finalists in Portugal. But they conceded just four.

Rehhagel was not afraid to tinker with his system, switching from 4-4-2 to 5-4-1 to 4-5-1 depending on the opposition. Against Spain in Zaragoza – where a 1-0 win established Greece's top spot in the group – Roma defender Traianos Dellas was deployed as a sweeper in a five-man defence. Zissis Vryzas and Angelos Haristeas alternated as the lone striker, with Vryzas and Bolton's Stelios Giannakopoulos also used in wide midfield, from where they joined the attack.

Thoughts now turn to Portugal. Rehhagel says: "We want to prove we didn't win our group by chance but because we are a strong team."

The Greeks hope 2004 will go down not only as the year they successfully hosted the Olympic Games but also when the nation's soccer won the respect of Europe.

THE SQUAD

	CLUB	DOB	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Kostas CHALKIAS	Panathinaikos	30.05.74	5	0
Fanis KATERGIANNAKIS	Olympiakos	16.02.74	6	0
Antonis NIKOPOLIDIS	Panathinaikos	14.10.71	37	0
DEFENDERS				
Paraskevas ANTZAS	Olympiakos	18.08.76	12	0
Nikos DABIZAS	Newcastle (Eng)	03.08.73	64	0
Traianos DELLAS	Roma (Ita)	31.01.76	11	0
Takis FISSAS	Panathinaikos	12.06.73	25	4
Yannis GOUMAS	Panathinaikos	24.05.75	23	0
Michalis KAPSIS	AEK Athens	18.10.73	5	0
Sotiris KYRGIAKOS	Panathinaikos	23.07.79	9	1
Christos PATSATZOGLOU	Olympiakos	19.03.79	16	0
Giorgios SEITARIDIS	Panathinaikos	04.06.81	14	0
Stelios VENETIDIS	Olympiakos	19.11.76	34	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Angelos BASINAS	Panathinaikos	03.01.76	37	2
Georgios GEORGIADIS	Olympiakos	08.03.72	55	11
Stelios GIANNAKOPOULOS	Bolton (Eng)	12.07.74	33	6
Pantelis KAFES	Olympiakos	24.06.78	15	2
Giorgios KARAGOUNIS	Internazionale (Ita)	06.03.77	28	3
Kostas KATSOURANIS	AEK Athens	21.06.79	2	0
Vassilis LAKIS	AEK Athens	10.09.76	24	3
Vassilis TSARTAS	AEK Athens	12.11.72	54	10
Theo ZAGORAKIS	AEK Athens	27.10.71	83	0
FORWARDS				
Ioannis AMANATIDIS	Stuttgart (Ger)	03.12.81	2	0
Lambros CHOUTOS	Olympiakos	07.12.79	10	2
Angelos HARISTEAS	Werder Bremen (Ger)	09.02.80	23	7
Nikos LIMBEROPOULOS	AEK Athens	04.08.75	39	8
Dimitris NALITZIS	AEK Athens	25.01.76	6	0
Demis NIKOLAIDIS	Atletico Madrid (Spa)	17.09.73	46	16
Dimitris PAPADOPOULOS	Panathinaikos	20.10.81	2	0
Zissis VRYZAS	Perugia (Ita)	09.11.73	41	5

Caps and goals up to and including Portugal v Greece (15.11.03)

Berth booked...the players celebrate qualification after beating Slovenia in the play-off second leg

Hello Portugal, goodbye Otto?

Veteran coach Baric may not be in charge for the finals. Nick Bidwell reports

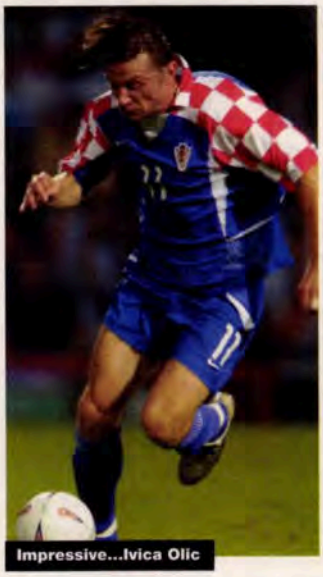
IN NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES, a coach who successfully leads his team through the qualifying minefield to a major finals finds himself praised for a job well done. Croatia coach Otto Baric is one of the exceptions.

No sooner had his team secured their place at Euro 2004 with a hard-fought 2-1 aggregate victory over Slovenia in the play-offs than federation board member Zdravko Mamic was intimating that Baric would not be offered a new deal when his contract expires at the end of this year. The influential Mamic, also Dinamo Zagreb's vice-president, gave the hugely significant soundbite: "Hello Portugal. Goodbye Otto."

He is far from the only one filing into the anti-Baric lobby. Other federation figures are said to be pushing ex-national team skipper Zvonimir Boban to throw his hat into the ring, while the local press have compiled a lengthy list of grievances against the 70-year-old Baric. These include his endless tactical fluctuations – he has wavered between 3-5-2, 3-4-3 and 4-4-2 – the rapid turnover of players since he took over from Mirko Jozic at the start of last season (Baric has used 44), his advancing years and his irritating habit of shifting blame on to his team in times of trouble.

Rumblings of dissent have also been emanating from the dressing-room. After the 1-1 home draw with Slovenia in the play-off first leg, experienced Hertha Berlin midfielder Niko Kovac made no attempt to conceal his antipathy towards the

Under fire...Otto Baric


Impressive...Ivica Olic

coach's game plan. "We played the wrong tactics tonight," he stormed. "At home we should have taken more of the initiative, set the tempo. We were far too defensive, especially in the first half."

Fortunately for Baric, he has found an influential ally in federation chief Vlatko Markovic. The latter may have described Croatia's first-leg performance as "scandalous", but their 1-0 win in the return in Ljubljana had him patting the veteran coach on the back. Markovic said: "There's no doubt Baric is a great expert, and even when his ideas aren't always understood by everybody, he is a coach who has built up the self-belief of the squad. Overall, I think the players like him."

Rebuilding job

Baric, a former coach of Austria and the man who steered Rapid Wien and Austria Salzburg to Cup-winners Cup and UEFA Cup Finals in 1985 and 1994 respectively, has proved much more able than his Croat detractors claim. He was appointed at a time of great uncertainty for Croatia, having to pick up and dust down a team that had fallen at the first hurdle at World Cup 2002 and embark on a large-scale rebuilding job following the international retirements of Zvonimir Soldo, Robert Jarni, Robert Prosinecki, Davor Suker and Alen Boksic.

By assuring everyone that Croatia would win their Euro 2004 qualifying group – they finished second to Bulgaria – Baric was always going to feel a backlash when results did not quite match the predictions. But even though his side had to go through the play-offs, he did ultimately deliver. After a poor start to the campaign – a goalless draw at home to Estonia and 2-0 defeat in Bulgaria – the Croats grew steadily more competitive. They would even have topped Group 8 if they had not lost 2-1 to Belgium in Brussels in September, a game they largely dominated.

Arguably, Baric's most notable achievement is to have incorporated so many youngsters into the squad, new faces who, apart from their talent, have added some much-needed vim and hunger to the mix. Of the new breed, midfielders such as Bayer Leverkusen's Marko Babic, Dario Srna of Shakhtar Donetsk and Jerko Leko of Kyiv Dynamo all combine dynamism with technical polish; Grasshopper attacker Mladen Petric is an outstanding prospect, as is teenage Dinamo Zagreb forward Niko Kranjcar.

For the first time in years, the fresh-faced outnumber the old guard.

No 1...Stipe Pletikosa

First-choice keeper Stipe Pletikosa is 24, as is impressive CSKA Moscow striker Ivica Olic; Juventus central defender Igor Tudor has masses of top-level experience but is only 25.

One man well worth keeping an eye out for in Portugal will be Stuttgart's 23-year-old Jurica Vranjes, a summer signing from Leverkusen. Once a bit-part playmaker, he has been a revelation this season in a defensive midfield role, combining bite in the tackle with intelligent covering and good use of the ball. Liverpool's Igor Biscan, who opted to go to a disco on the eve of the final group qualifier, against Bulgaria, and now looks to be *persona non grata*, will probably not be missed.

Baric also has a flair for making successful calculated gambles. Benfica striker Tomislav Sokota was given his full debut in the play-off second leg and looked the part; Maccabi Haifa schemer Giovanni Rosso has answered all the doubters who thought he could not bridge the gap between Israeli football and the international stage; and no one has done more for the Croat cause of late than 29-year-old Monaco striker Dado Prso (see profile, page 46).

Equally important to Croat hopes at Euro 2004 will be the continued rude health of their back line. The unit, breached only five times in 10 ties en route to Portugal, is built around the discipline and tenacity of Tudor, Bayern Munich's Robert Kovac and Portsmouth's Boris Zivkovic.

"It took some time to look at the players available to me and then whittle them down to an 18-man nucleus I thought could carry us to the European Championship," says Baric. "Now we have a unified team, one with a new spirit. We don't need to hide from anyone."

The coach is as upbeat as ever. But will his fine words convince the federation to stick with him?

THE SQUAD

	CLUB	DOB	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Tomislav BUTINA	Club Brugge (Blg)	30.03.74	10	0
Stipe PLETIKOSA	Shakhtar Donetsk (Ukr)	08.01.79	37	0
Vedran RUNJE	Marseille (Fra)	10.02.76	0	0
DEFENDERS				
Robert KOVAC	Bayern Munich (Ger)	06.04.74	33	0
Mato NERETLJAK	Hajduk Split	03.06.79	2	0
Goran SABLIC	Kyiv Dynamo (Ukr)	04.08.79	2	0
Anthony SERIC	Brescia (Ita)	15.01.79	11	0
Dario SIMIC	Milan (Ita)	12.11.75	62	2
Josip SIMUNIC	Hertha Berlin (Ger)	18.02.78	19	1
Mario TOKIC	Grazer AK (Aut)	23.07.75	10	0
Igor TUDOR	Juventus (Ita)	16.04.78	33	0
Boris ZIVKOVIC	Portsmouth (Eng)	15.11.75	31	2
MIDFIELDERS				
Jasmin AGIC	Dinamo Zagreb	26.12.74	12	0
Marko BABIC	Bayer Leverkusen (Ger)	21.01.81	11	0
Niko KOVAC	Hertha Berlin (Ger)	15.10.71	33	5
Jerko LEKO	Kyiv Dynamo (Ukr)	09.04.80	14	1
Ivica MORNAR	Anderlecht (Blg)	12.01.74	14	1
Miljenko MUMLEK	Varteks	21.11.72	8	1
Ivan REZIC	Varteks	15.09.79	1	0
Giovanni ROSSO	Maccabi Haifa (Isr)	17.11.72	11	1
Dario SRNA	Shakhtar Donetsk (Ukr)	01.05.82	12	1
Stjepan TOMAS	Fenerbahce (Tur)	06.03.76	32	1
Jurica VRANJES	Stuttgart (Ger)	31.01.80	12	0
FORWARDS				
Niko KRANJCAR	Dinamo Zagreb	13.08.84	0	0
Marijo MARIC	Karnten (Aut)	12.01.77	6	1
Ivica OLIC	CSKA Moscow (Rus)	14.09.79	18	4
Mladen PETRIC	Grasshopper (Swi)	01.01.81	5	1
Dado PRSO	Monaco (Fra)	05.11.74	9	3
Milan RAPAJIC	Hajduk Split	16.08.73	39	4
Tomislav SOKOTA	Benfica (Por)	08.04.77	1	0

Caps and goals up to and including Slovenia v Croatia (19.11.03)

Dado PRSO

Croatian striker in stunning form for club and country

VERY FEW PLAYERS have been granted the instant Midas touch that was bequeathed by football's gods to Dado Prso for 14 magical days for both club and country in November.

The climax for the Monaco striker was in scoring the decisive goals that tipped edgy Croatia into the European Championship finals for the second time in three tournaments.

But beaten neighbours Slovenia could hardly complain they had not been warned. This was the same Prso who had just written himself into European football history when he scored four times in 26 minutes in Monaco's Champions League record 8-3 thrashing of Deportivo La Coruna.

That was on November 5, Prso's 29th birthday. Four days later he was a winner again – heading the late goal that brought Monaco a 1-0 victory away to his old club, Ajaccio. It was only his second League goal of term.

Six days after that came another goal as he gave Croatia a home lead after five minutes of their Euro 2004 play-off first leg. But the balance tipped towards Slovenia after Ermin Siljak's goal earned his side a 1-1 draw.

The following Wednesday, in Ljubljana, Croatia were teetering on the brink of elimination when Igor Tudor was sent off just before the hour. Two minutes later, however, Prso rode to the rescue on the breakaway with the only goal. Once more he was the hero of the hour.

Not bad for a player who did not make his debut for his country until last March, against Belgium in Zagreb. He says: "That game is one of the best memories of my career. We won 4-0 and I scored. On my debut! It's engraved on my heart. OK, so my debut was late coming, but better late than never. I appreciated it, made the most of it. I knew, better than anyone else, exactly how much work it was worth.

"After that we had to beat Bulgaria in the last qualifying tie to reach the play-offs. There was no way we dared lose. We were too good a team not to get to the finals. Bulgaria had already qualified so it was between ourselves and Belgium for a place in the play-offs.

"Belgium were bound to beat Estonia so we had to beat Bulgaria. We owed it to our fans – and then to reach the finals, of course!"

Prso's national pride and ambition is driven by his teenage memories of the chaos and devastation left by the civil war which saw Croatia break away from the former Yugoslavia.

He says: "I have seen my country in wartime. We went on playing football even when bombs and shells were falling near us. Fear, pain, fighting, bloodshed. That's no life. So today I am happy and proud to be able to play for my country in peacetime. Beating Slovenia in the play-offs is a wonderful Christmas present for our country."

Croatia, an independent nation since the early 1990s, reached the quarter-finals of Euro 96 then finished third at the 1998 World Cup in France. Zadar-born Prso remembers it well. He says: "That team had some great players – Davor Suker, Zvonimir Boban, Robert Prosinecki. I was playing in France with Ajaccio at the time of France 98 and I invited everyone to my home to watch the semi-final between France and Croatia on TV. When Suker opened the scoring I went mad. Unfortunately, we lost 2-1.

"I had taken up French citizenship by then but my heart was still Croat. I love France but I love Croatia even more. Winning the World Cup meant so much to the French people and I don't begrudge them...but I still wish we'd won."

Keir Radnedge

FACT FILE

Club Monaco (Fra)
Country Croatia
Born November 5, 1974, in Zadar
Previous clubs Hajduk Split, Pazinha, St-Raphael (Fra), Ajaccio (Fra)
International debut March 2003, v Belgium
International caps 9 (3 goals)
Honours French League Cup 2003

Maris VERPAKOVSKIS

Wolves reject becomes Latvia play-off hero

BEFORE LATVIA'S FOOTBALLERS became the talk of the continent by sensationally booking their ticket to Euro 2004, the ice-hockey rink was the only place to find sporting superstars in the Baltic nation. Not any longer.

Thanks to his six goals in the European qualifiers, Maris Verpakovskis now stands on the same pedestal as all the leading local practitioners of skate, stick and puck.

Quite rightly too. No one did more than the 24-year-old Skonto Riga striker to push the Latvians towards their first international tournament finals. Indeed, the more important the game, the better he seemed to perform. He ensured his team finished second in their group with the only goal of the game in Sweden and was twice on target as his team upset Turkey 3-2 on aggregate in the play-offs.

Was this the same Verpakovskis who was on trial at Premiership new boys Wolverhampton Wanderers last August but was not offered a contract? Unfortunately, for struggling Wolves, it is. Now, thanks to the Latvian's recent exploits, the Black Country club may not get another chance to snare him. With an enticing fee of £1 million on his head, there should be no shortage of takers.

Verpakovskis is the ideal man to be the sole front-runner in the 4-5-1 formation favoured by Latvia coach Aleksandr Starkovs. His speed off the mark makes him a redoubtable counter-attacker, he has the stamina and willingness to cover large swathes of ground, holding up the ball presents few problems to him and he can also scythe through a defence with his dribbling ability.

"What can you say about a player who has scored so many vital goals for us and has done so much to help us experience the thrill of reaching the European finals?" declared Starkovs. "This is, of course, a team game and every player in the squad has played his part. I would never want to decry the unity of my side. All the same, Verpakovskis has been very influential for us.

"From the moment he scored in our 3-1 defeat in Hungary in June, you could sense his confidence growing, and he has just kept it going. He's very hungry. He's a perfectionist. After a game, he doesn't dwell on the goals he scores but is critical of himself for missing other chances. That has to be a good sign."

Verpakovskis began his career at hometown club Metalurgs Liepaja, making his senior debut at 17 towards the end of the 1997 season. In those days an attacking midfielder, he passed his first milestone the following year with a substitute appearance in the Latvian Cup Final against the country's all-powerful Skonto Riga. Sadly for him, there would be no upset. Skonto prevailed 1-0, with the winner coming from future Southampton striker Marian Pahars.

Quick-witted, strong on the ball and always enthusiastic for the battle, Verpakovskis would subsequently be employed further forward. He developed over the next couple of seasons into one of the headliners on the Metalurgs bill. In 2000 he was instrumental in the club reaching another Cup Final, when he scored the consolation goal in a 4-1 defeat by Skonto. Later that year he gained his first full cap in a World Cup qualifier against San Marino and early in 2001 gravitated inevitably towards the Skonto orbit, where he has starred in their last three championship-winning campaigns.

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

Club **Skonto Riga**
Country **Latvia**
Born **October 15, 1979, in Liepaja**
Previous club **Metalurgs Liepaja**
International debut **November 2000, v San Marino**
International caps **28 (10 goals)**
Honours **Latvian League 2001, 2002, 2003 (Skonto); Latvian Cup 2002**

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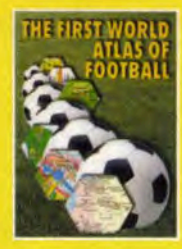

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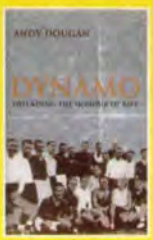

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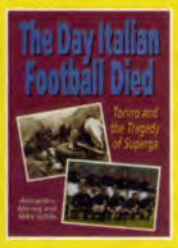

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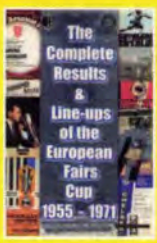

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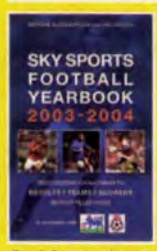

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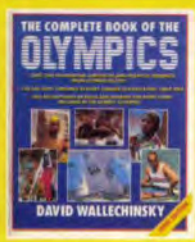

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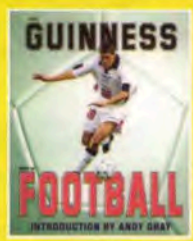

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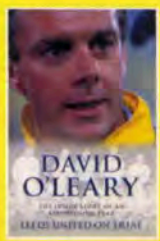

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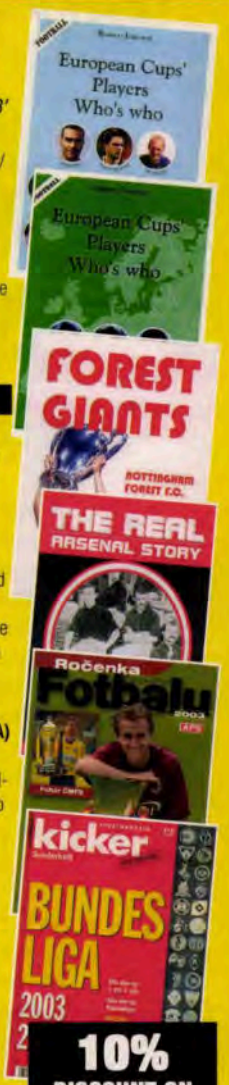

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Keir Radnedge **COMMENTARY**

Action not words

It's time to stop the club versus country rows

I AM WITH G-14 on this. Not the G-14 of the sensationalist tabloid headlines, the mythical organisation of strikes and superleagues. But the pragmatic G-14 that opposes the hypocrisy and daylight robbery of the club versus country confusion.

The reality of the subject is not sexy enough for vapid football chat shows on TV and radio, it is too heavy and boring for newspapers, and the vested interests who run the game are scared to engage for fear of admitting the other side has a case.

Consider the facts. National associations claim the right to summon any player of their choice to play for the national team or attend a squad session. Not only that, but a minority of federations 'kidnap' that player for up to six weeks for a World Cup or regional championship.

The federations contribute nothing towards defrayment of wages. Some players return to their clubs with reputations and transfer values enhanced; but they also return with pay expectations enhanced. On the other hand, players may also return home with serious injuries or with their reputations dented through poor form, a bad mistake or a lack of opportunity.

Either way, players are the financial winners. They are being paid simultaneously by both the clubs and national associations. No wonder you never hear players complaining about Sven Goran Eriksson's overloaded squads from which 20 of them get a game.

Clubs have been taken for mugs throughout the history of the professional game by their national associations. For a century of international football, they accepted it. No more.

Unfortunately for the credibility of the cause, the fight has been taken up by a narrow grouping of elite clubs popularly considered European champions of avarice.

Yet world and European clubs have no other forum. Even Gordon Taylor, chief executive of the English players' union, can be heard complaining occasionally that football is the only industry that lacks that formal essential – an employers' organisation. "How can you negotiate properly on serious issues," he says, "when there's no one to talk to?" Or no one willing to listen because, in the case of FIFA and UEFA, it threatens to upset their financial applecart.

When it comes to making money off the backs of players (and their clubs), FIFA and UEFA leave no legal stone unturned to ensure they nail down every last cent.

Yet, when it comes to the game itself they claim the right to ignore the law in defiance of all social and employment convention. FIFA's new mission statement reads: "My game is fair play." But to whom?

Imagine that the BBC wants to borrow commentator Martin Tyler from Sky for six weeks. It wants to employ him exclusively for its own match coverage. It demands he does nothing for Sky in that period. And yet...it expects Sky to go on paying his wages.

Ridiculous? But that's what happens with international footballers selected for World Cups and regional championships.

Get round the table

The club v country issue is contentious because no serious attempt has been made to codify the responsibilities on both sides. It's time that happened. It's time FIFA removed its head from the sand and got round the table with the national associations, clubs and players.

Yes, the players have a role in these negotiations. After all, they have been milking this double-pay system for years. Indeed, the more canny players (such as the Dutch) go to a World Cup not on a fixed match fee and bonus arrangement but on a profit-share basis. That way they are guaranteed serious cash, win or lose, while all the time still banking their club wages.

I have heard FIFA president Sepp Blatter reject the claim for compensation so many times I could write his speech. It starts with a reasoned statement of what he perceives to be the claim, it continues with a wistful regret about those with narrow vested interests who do not have the greater good of the game at heart and then it goes for the jugular by asking how the impoverished Third World federations could ever reimburse the pay packets of a Nwankwo Kanu or Rigobert Song? Blatter then sits back, raises a quizzical eyebrow and rests his case.

Fighting the system...Carlos Tevez

But that is to mis-state the claim, which is simply that G-14 wants compensation for the withdrawal of players from their clubs by national associations for the showpiece international events. NOT full pay – but a recognition of the clubs' role in the relationship. The compensation would be funded by a cut from the enormous profits generated by a World Cup or European Championship. This way, the minnow federations – whether Senegal or Latvia – would not be direct losers.

National associations are handed their cut of World Cup profits on a formulaic basis. Amending the way the cake is sliced to recognise the clubs' role in preparing the players is easy enough; FIFA might even make the federations' job easier by setting player pay rates; then, no group of players could hold their national association to ransom.

The compensation concept has already been conceded not merely in principle but in practice by both the German and Dutch

federations. The sum Ajax receive for releasing Rafael Van der Vaart comes nowhere near covering his wages, but the point is Ajax have a vested financial interest in their players being chosen for Holland.

Sort it out!

Isn't it in everyone's interests to sort out club v country once for all? Write it down. Negotiate the deal. After all, that's what happens with TV companies, who bring in the money to screen the Beckhams of this footballing world, not the Blatters.

Blatter became extremely agitated at the World Youth Cup about the issue of Carlos Tevez from Boca Juniors. Tevez went to court in Buenos Aires to win the right to refuse selection for Argentina so he could face Milan in the World Club Cup.

When Blatter threatened Tevez with suspension for the Youth Cup duration, Boca pulled a clever stunt with the full connivance of the Argentinian federation (whose president is Julio Grondona, Blatter's senior FIFA vice-president). The player was declared unfit by Boca but included in the Argentina squad to cover formalities. Boca were then expected to get him fit just in time for the World Club Cup (during which he would, presumably, suffer a recurrence).

Clever but also transparently cynical and a clear example of how the present, club/country arrangement is not working.

Blatter also said he had no interest in discussing the issue of compensation with G-14. So will the clubs withdraw their players? Of course not. They have taken a course that is far more sensible but also far more dangerous to FIFA and UEFA and the rest. They have engaged Jean-Louis Dupont, Jean-Marc Bosman's lawyer.

Dupont reported to G-14's recent quarterly meeting in Lyon that regulations permitting national associations to withdraw the services of players from their clubs appeared to be invalid under both European Union and Swiss law. FIFA and UEFA have been given until G-14's next meeting, in Valencia on February 17, to open talks or risk legal challenge.

The greatest danger to FIFA may come from its own intransigence. Milan's executive director Umberto Gandini says: "If we went to court we could smash FIFA's rules and regulations into a thousand pieces. The catch is football needs bodies such as FIFA and UEFA to hold the game together."

Davies, the missing link

FOR SEVERAL MONTHS I had been puzzling about the whereabouts of David Davies, greatest survivor of various FA purges and new brooms, and once charged with communications as far back as those prehistoric days in musty Lancaster Gate.

Perhaps, with hindsight, Davies was once almost too much in evidence – popping up to front every cup draw and press conference. But then, that was his job – to develop the FA's communications strategy (or, more to the point, put a strategy in place of the previous black hole).

In due course Davies progressed to executive director as chief executives came and went. Paul Newman became the chief point of contact as far as England was concerned but he was among the victims of the redundancy cull that followed the departure of Adam Crozier. Spokesman duties were taken up by Adrian Bevington.

Then we had the Rio Ferdinand fiasco, provoked by no one else (not by the FA nor Manchester United) except the player himself in missing his dope test. Was Davies brought back to sort out the media frenzy? No, that task went to Paul Barber, who had seen 'and communications' tacked on to his title as 'director of marketing'.

That wasn't clever and wasn't Barber's fault. But the perception was that communication was no longer a priority at the FA and this fuelled media fury over the ensuing chaos. The Alan Smith affair, a month later, revealed that even internal communication at Soho Square had gone out of the window.

It was unfortunate for Mark Palios, the new chief executive, who had chosen this issue on which to raise his head above the press conference parapet and was duly shot down in flames.

Around this time the FA's glossy annual review thumped through the letterbox. Introduction by Palios, articles extolling the FA's work by various authors such as England coach Sven Goran Eriksson and Barber. But not Davies, the FA's one trained, professional communicator. Anything strike you?

Then, at last, at the Euro 2004 draw, I spotted him! Davies was at the post-draw press conference, mixed in with the crowd of official minders and minor officials. The following day his name was even quoted on some of the back pages, explaining away various contentious issues.

Not, I assume, that he will remain in sight for very long. Palios has moved decisively to refresh the face of the FA. Out goes the luckless Barber. In, as new communications leader, will come Colin Gibson, hitherto head of sport at the *Daily Mail*. Gibson, in that role, has given the FA a good chasing over its financial affairs. Clearly, it is better to bring him on board as fast as possible (though, as a newspaper man, he will presumably have to overcome the same suspicions from broadcasters with which the print media perceived Newman, a former broadcaster).

I wonder how long Gibson's patience will withstand the time-consuming demands of the internal politics at work within Soho Square. Who knows – one day in the dim and distant future we might even catch another glimpse of David Davies.

Worst foot forward...FA chief executive Mark Palios endured a torrid time over the Ferdinand fiasco

Shelf life

Keir Radnedge and Gavin Hamilton round up the latest launches in the crowded world of football publishing

ONE OF THE problems for the book world's international football statisticians is that collating the material and publishing between hard or semi-hard covers consumes an almost self-defeating amount of time. By the time the tome weighs down the bookshop shelves half the next season has gone and significant value has been lost.

Two of this autumn's yearbooks sought to tackle that in different ways. The ***BBC Football Yearbook 2003/2004*** (edited by Terry Pratt, BBC Books, £19.99) solved the dilemma by complementing the usual domestic detail by including appearances, goals etc from 'only' France, Germany, Holland, Italy and Spain. The drawback is in the intimidating volume of information and fantastically fussy layout which demands a high-powered magnifying glass to appreciate the more eclectic stats.

A far wider breadth of countries is covered by the ***SoccerAssociation.com Yearbook 2003/04*** (edited by Peter Wilson, Kirby Wilson, £27.95). The statistics are far more straightforward, omit subjective editorial, and cover 17 major European nations plus, peculiarly, Argentina. A valuable section is the player A-Z, similar to the sort familiar to perusers of *Rothmans/Sky* or the *Almanacco Illustrato del Calcio*.

Home affairs

On the British domestic front a popular source of reference is the ***PFA Footballers' Who's Who 2003/2004*** (edited by Barry Hugman, Lennard Queen Anne Press, £16.99). This clearly benefits from the imposition of the transfer windows since they restrict the 'instantly out-of-date' factor.

In the second round of the FA Cup in 1926-27 Bournemouth won 6-1 at home to Bristol Rovers. This may not matter to most fans, but the fact that it proves wrong many record books that have always awarded victory to Rovers by 1-0 demonstrates the single-minded attention to detail Mike Collett has invested in his ***Complete Record of the FA Cup*** (SportsBooks, £19.95).

A statistical reference of a different sort is to be found in the final 85 pages of ***England, Their England*** by Nick Harris (Pitch, £18.99). This tells the tales of all the foreigners who have played English League football.

Harris invested enormous effort in tracking down many of his subjects for what is, for all the accompanying stats, a superb description of the social history of foreign footballers – from the Scandinavian amateurs to the German prisoners of war through to the present flood tide.

Perhaps the title gives a slightly misleading perspective on the subject, which is also the only minor criticism that can be levelled against Norman Fox's long-overdue biography of Jimmy Hogan – ***Prophet or Traitor?*** (Parrs Wood, £9.95).

The book could hardly have been published at a more appropriate time – the 50th anniversary of Hungary's 6-3 triumph at Wembley for which Hogan had provided much of the creative foundation.

Hogan was worshipped in central Europe, while his concept of a beautiful game – long before Pele got near the phrase – was largely ignored back home in England. That was a source of enduring frustration. The truth of Hogan's work was not that he deliberately sought to be a football missionary but that he was given little other option by the shortsighted complacency back home.

Hogan was also proof that great playing achievement is not a prerequisite for an ability to teach the game.

Missionary work of a different sort is the subject of David Tossell's entertaining ***Playing For Uncle Sam*** (Mainstream, £9.99), the story of British players' contribution to the rise and fall of the North American Soccer League.

Some, like Ron Newman, embraced the American promotional style; some, like George Best, provided their reputation but little more; many others took seriously their duties to promote the game in local schools. But the conclusion is that too few people (players, managers and administrators) had a long-term commitment to the development of soccer in the USA and that this was the fault line into which the entire edifice collapsed.

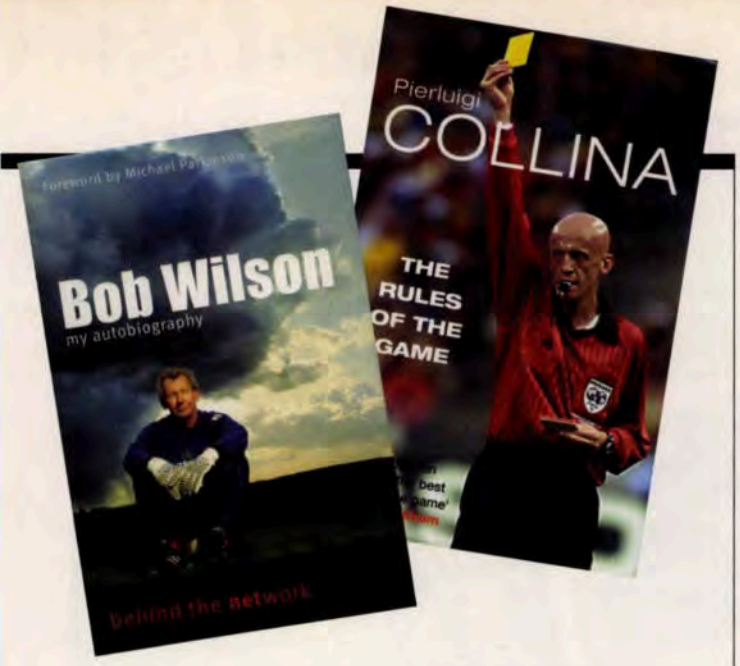
That makes Tossell's thematic chapters more interesting – viewed through the prism of today's MLS – than the ball-by-ball chapters.

Coffee-table football

Football Days: Classic Football Photographs by Peter Robinson (Mitchell Beazley, £30) is a heavyweight contender for space on the coffee table, while ***Football: The Golden Age*** by John Tennant (Cassell, £16.99) is a wonderful pictorial record of the British game through the decades.

Photographer Kevin Cummins was granted unrivalled behind-the-scenes access at Manchester City for the 2002-03 season. The result is ***We're Not Really Here*** (Dazed, £25.99), a brilliant record of the club's final season at Maine Road.

This Is Anfield: An Official Modern History of Liverpool FC (genesis-publications.com, £195) may cost just short of £200 (£375 if you want the deluxe edition, signed by Gerard Houllier) but it



is a beautifully-crafted collection of photographs and first-hand accounts by players and staff.

On the biography front, the shelf runneth over. In ***The Rules of the Game*** (Macmillan, £12.99), Pierluigi Collina has ventured where few referees have been before. He offers some interesting insights, but the fear for the Italian must be that, in his quest for publicity and cash, he will lose some of the credibility that has made him one of the world's top officials.

Mario Risoli's ***John Charles: Gentle Giant*** (Mainstream, £14.99) is a well-researched and absorbing account of the life of one of Britain's greatest players.

Unlike previous books on Arsenal's manager, ***Wenger: The Making of a Legend*** by Jasper Rees (Short Books, £14.99) concentrates on his formative years in Alsace. Rees provides an intelligently-written narrative and talks to Wenger's close friends and relatives, but crucially not to the man himself.

Bobby Robson's ***Living The Game*** (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £18.99) is a glossy account of the Newcastle manager's life with almost as many pictures as words.

Bob Wilson saw no use for a ghost writer for his autobiography ***Behind The Network*** (Hodder & Stoughton, £18.99). But tales from his life as a player, coach and TV presenter flow effortlessly and he writes candidly about the death from cancer of his daughter Anna.

Manchester United: The Untold Story by Ned Kelly (Michael O'Mara, £18) is billed as the "book they tried to ban". Kelly is a former SAS man who for 12 years supplied the 'security' men who make visiting Old Trafford such a pleasure. Despite the legal hoo-hah that preceded its publication, the book contains precious few revelations.

Other books worthy of note in the crowded Christmas marketplace are ***The Fan*** by Hunter Davies (Pomona, £9.99), a collection of football columns from the *New Statesman*; ***Everton: The School of Science*** by James Corbett (Macmillan, £17.99), a lengthy but absorbing account of Everton by the founder of the fanzine *Gwladys Sings The Blues* and published to coincide with the club's 125th anniversary; and the brilliantly-illustrated ***Football Yearbook 2003-4*** by David Goldblatt (Dorling Kindersley, £20).

Another book we've enjoyed this past year is David McVay's ***Steak...Diana Ross: Diary of a Football Nobody*** (Parrs Wood, £9.95), a very frank and funny account of life with 1970s Notts County. The subject matter does not sound promising, but McVay pulls it off with style.

And a final mention for the prolific output of Tempus. The Stroud-based publisher continues to step where others fear to tread with its extensive list of club histories, though it is expanding into other areas. ***Homes of Non-League Football*** by Peter Miles (Tempus, £18.99) is a remarkably detailed labour of love which features 350 clubs from the upper levels of the non-League 'pyramid'.

● *Note to publishers: We only review books when we are sent review copies. We cannot review press releases.*

QUIZ mitre

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THIS MONTH'S QUESTION:

Which player has scored the fastest hat-trick in the European Cup/Champions League?

OCTOBER QUIZ WINNERS

1ST PRIZE:
William Aitkenhead, Grangemouth.

2 RUNNERS-UP:
G Coutts, Hastings; Paul D Found, Harrogate.

We asked you to name the players who have won the European Cup with two different clubs.

ANSWER:
Saul Malatrasi (Inter 1965, Milan 1969)
Ronald Koeman (PSV 1988, Barcelona 1992)
Miodrag Belodedici (Steaua 1986, Red Star 1991)
Frank Rijkaard (Milan 1989, 1990, Ajax 1995)
Dejan Savicevic (Red Star 1991, Milan 1994)
Marcel Desailly (Marseille 1993, Milan 1994)
Didier Deschamps (Marseille 1993, Juventus 1996)
Vladimir Jugovic (Red Star 1991, Juventus 1996)
Paulo Sousa (Juventus 1996, Borussia Dortmund 1997)
Christian Panucci (Milan 1994, Real Madrid 1998)
Clarence Seedorf (Ajax 1995, Real Madrid 1998, Milan 2003)

NOVEMBER QUIZ WINNERS

1ST PRIZE:
Richard Vale, Croydon.

5 RUNNERS-UP:
Jose Carlos Costa, Carnaxide, Portugal; Francis Bailey, Barcelona; R J Timson, Madrid; Tony Ferguson, Willagee, West Australia; David Tomkins, Walsall.

We asked you to name the nine players to have played for England since the 1966 World Cup whose surnames begin and end with the same letter.

ANSWER:
Gary Stevens (two of same name)
Nobby Stiles
John Scales
Paul Scholes
Keith Newton
Jimmy Rimmer
Brian Talbot
Dennis Tueart

WS WORLD SOCCER JANUARY 1987

RIVER MASTERS

From Jonathan Shallard in Tokyo

WORLD CLUB CUP FINAL

Intuitive

Assessment

NEW! Dutch-Belgian Football-yearbook 86-87

CAVAN'S HOT POTATO WORRIES BRITAIN . . .

BRIAN GLANVILLE'S VIEW — See Pages 18 and 19

Issue

Favour

'Just whose side does Harry think he is on? This is a frightening situation which has caused great concern to the home nations'

English FA secretary Ted Croker

SEVENTEEN YEARS ago the United Kingdom's unique position within FIFA was under threat again.

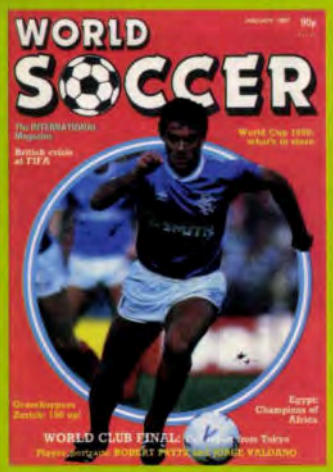
Opponents of the special voting status enjoyed by the four home nations – England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – were preparing to step up their campaign to see the UK Four reduced to the equivalent of one vote at FIFA Congress.

Northern Ireland's Harry Cavan, a FIFA vice-president, put the cat among the pigeons when he said: "The African block actually tried to suggest that as all the home countries had a common passport they should be restricted to one vote at FIFA Congress...they may well be paving the way to us having only one team after the 1990 World Cup."

There was a predictably strong reaction to Cavan's comments. "Just whose side does Harry think he is on?" complained English FA secretary Ted Croker. "This is a frightening situation which has provided great concern for the home nations. We cannot think what possessed Harry to come out with this. I have telexed him for an explanation."

Elsewhere, River Plate provided a fitting end to a wonderful year for Argentinian football when they won the World Club Cup for the first time with a 1-0 win over Steaua Bucharest in Tokyo.

Davie Cooper of Rangers was the cover star, despite having been sent off in a goalless draw with Borussia Monchengladbach in the third round of the UEFA Cup. His team's defeat on away goals left Dundee United as Britain's sole remaining representatives in Europe, with English clubs banned following the Heysel stadium disaster.



Magical, mysterious tour

Brian Glanville on Dinamo Moscow's legendary visit to Britain in 1945

IN NOVEMBER 1945, so soon after a war in which 20 million Russians had been killed and the country's great cities ravaged, the Dinamo Moscow team came to Britain.

Their extraordinary tour moved George Orwell to write that sport was an unfailing cause of ill will, and that if the visit had had any effect, it was to make Anglo-Soviet relations worse than before.

Dinamo played four matches in three countries and lost none of them, though they were a touch fortunate not to be beaten by Chelsea in the first game, since their equalising goal looked well offside. It was allowed by English referee Lieutenant-Commander Clark, who was to prove a great deal more generous to the opposition than Nicolai Latychev, the Russian referee who had travelled with Dinamo, in the subsequent 'fog farce' at Tottenham.

Before the first game, Paul Irwin of the *Sunday Express* wrote what must have been one of the most ill-judged pieces in the history of British sports journalism. Watching Dinamo train at London's White City, the paper's chief sports writer described them as "no more than a bunch of earnest amateurs, so slow you could almost hear them think", and "no match for our professional teams". Quite what he felt if he was at the Chelsea game to see Dinamo's dazzling display of skill, speed, intelligence and initiative is hard to imagine.

Who knows how many packed into Stamford Bridge that midweek winter afternoon to see the 'mysterious' Russians? Perhaps there were as many as 100,000 swarming into the stadium, climbing over walls, eventually gathering around the touchlines. And they were well rewarded by the Russians' superb football.

Dinamo took the field carrying bunches of flowers, which they presented to the nonplussed Chelsea players. The fans roared with laughter, then applauded. Chelsea, with two Fulham players – Jim Taylor and Joe Bacuzzi – in defence, had the prolific Tommy Lawton at centre-forward. At the peak of his powers, he had recently been bought from Everton for £11,500: specifically, claimed the Russian press, so he could play against Dinamo. He certainly had an outstanding game, which was just as well, given the chasing the visitors gave the Chelsea defence.

'George Orwell was moved to write that the visit had made Anglo-Soviet relations worse than before'

For the first 20 minutes, Dinamo outplayed a bewildered Chelsea, hitting the post, hitting the veteran ex-England keeper Vic Woodley, yet falling two goals behind. The first came when Lawton forced the ball away from goalkeeper Alexei Khomich for Len Goulden, once England's inside-left, to score; the second when a clearance rebounded from inside-right Reg Williams into the net.

Scintillating form

But Dinamo were unperturbed, and their inside-forward trio of Vassili Kartsev, Vsevolod Bobrov and Constantin Beskov – lying slightly behind the other two – were in scintillating form.

Leonid Soloviev missed a penalty and it was still 2-0 at half-time, but midway through the second half Kartsev beat Woodley from 30 yards. Soon after that, he set up an equaliser for right-winger Evgeny Archangelski via a deflection. But when a Dinamo defender kicked the ball high into the air, Lawton headed it home after one of his magisterial leaps. Bobrov made it 3-3 having been five yards offside, but Dinamo surely deserved the draw.

The following Saturday they went to Cardiff and crushed the Third Division South team 10-1, most of the goals being flicked in at close range. Cyril Spiers, the Cardiff manager, once an international goalkeeper, called Dinamo the finest team he'd ever seen: "They are a machine, and not an ordinary football team."

So to the next, midweek match at Tottenham against Arsenal, who were then sharing the ground. It should never have been played. Thick fog descended and to make things worse, Latychev, whom Dinamo insisted took charge of one of the games, placed himself on one side of the ground, his linesmen, invisibly, on the other.

Arsenal manager George Allison concocted a team that included the peerless Stanley Matthews on the right wing, Stan Mortensen of Blackpool and England at inside-left, and Ronnie Rooke of Fulham, due to join Arsenal the following year, at centre-forward. "A thousand men lighted a thousand cigarettes," wrote L V Manning in the *Daily Sketch*, "and it looked like a thousand bonfires."

Almost at once, Dinamo scored through Beskov. But Rooke replied, Mortensen scored twice and Matthews beat the Dinamo left-back Ivan Stankevich at will. Beskov got another goal, so that at half-time Arsenal led 3-2. Visibility was worse than ever, but Latychev played on. A Russian speaker later told Allison he had heard Dinamo manager Mikhail Yakushin tell the referee to keep the game going only if Dinamo were ahead.

Strange things certainly went on in the fog. At one stage Dinamo seemed to have 12 men on the field. Kartsev's equaliser was yards offside – a linesman had flagged, but could Latychev, destined to referee the 1962 World Cup Final, even see him? Mortensen was tripped 10 yards out; no penalty. Rooke shook Mikhail Semichastny off his back and beat Khomich: a free-kick went to Dinamo. Then Bobrov scored in the impenetrable gloom – final score 4-3.

The Russians had one more match to go – a bruising affair at Ibrox where they drew 2-2 with an over-robust Rangers. "Time saved Dinamo from a knockout," ran Manning's report.

The FA wanted to arrange a Wembley game against a representative side, but Dinamo rejected it. So they returned, via Sweden, where they thrashed a strong Norkopping 5-0. It was a shame the tour was blemished by what happened at White Hart Lane, for much of their football had been innovative and thrilling.

Raising the roof...the fans look down as Lawton beats Khomich to set up Chelsea's first goal

Back from the brink

Howard Johnson reports how Notts County, the Football League's oldest club, nearly went out of business

Plea from the heart...Notts County fans campaign to save their club

IT COULDN'T HAVE been any tighter. After 18 months in administration Notts County, the Football League's oldest club, can finally start to at least talk about a future.

For many people it had been impossible to believe one could exist. When the club went into administration in June 2002 with debts of around £6 million few could have foreseen that it would be 18 months before they would emerge again. They even faced the explicit threat of expulsion from the Football League on a deadline day of December 9, due to the club's seeming inability to find a financial saviour.

The threat to boot County out of the League would surely have been carried out had not the Blenheim consortium found the £4.2m required for the takeover of the club. Expulsion would have been all the more certain given the furore that has surrounded the potential advantages available to clubs who end up in administration – primarily, getting their debt reduced, a debt that has often been built up by spending lavishly on players and their wages.

Football League chairman Sir Brian Mawhinney did not pull any punches when he said: "While company administration is principally a matter for the courts, it remains the League's duty to ensure insolvency procedures do not distort fair competition between clubs."

So how did County get themselves so deep in the hole in the first place?

"It's the age-old story of ridiculous ambitions," says local journalist Paul Taylor, who has followed the sorry saga from the start. "The former owners, Albert Scardino and Peter Storrie, had big plans for the club when they got hold of it in 2000 and immediately signed players on extravagant contracts. When the ITV Digital deal went west and the big TV revenues were no longer there, the club simply spiralled downwards."

No wage cut

Of course, if County's biggest problem was a massive wage bill, surely the way forward would have been to ask players to take a hefty wage cut. Not much chance of that, according to Taylor.

"There are players at County who are earning somewhere around two grand a week, which is obviously insane money for a club in the Second Division. But as far as I know there were no hands in the air offering to take a pay cut to get the club out of this mess."

Paul Finnity of local firm Kroll Buchler Phillips was appointed by the High Court to administrate the club's affairs and attempt to put a rescue package in place, but the task proved to be extremely difficult. Various takeover proposals fell by the wayside. One, incredibly, was to try to install former Bradford City head honcho Geoffrey Richmond as chief executive – the same

Geoffrey Richmond who had left a £13m debt behind him at Bradford.

It was only when the Blenheim consortium, spearheaded by former director Peter Joyce, finally came along that a solid deal was finalised. "The club has been very lucky," says Taylor. "As far as I can tell there is one very wealthy individual who is a part of this consortium and doesn't want his identity to be revealed. But it seems that he has personally put his hand in his pocket at the 11th hour to plug the cash hole, simply because he doesn't want to see the club die."

Not that there haven't been other County fans who have mobilised themselves and attempted to come to the club's financial aid. Part of the consortium's proposal was dependent on the Notts County Supporters Trust chipping in with £250,000, their reward being a 'fan on the board' scenario should the proposal be accepted.

Amazingly, through a variety of fundraising events, as well as donations from the city and county councils, the target was reached. And there were also some heart-warming efforts made by the wider football community at large to save County. David Johnson, a striker with city rivals Nottingham Forest, put £500 into the kitty, County's October League Cup opponents Chelsea donated their players' shirts for auction, and the County players, while shying away from a wage cut, at least persuaded their wives and partners to pose for a 'tastefully nude' calendar, with the proceeds being donated to the Trust.

Now County are out of administration Finnity is bullish about their prospects and the lessons that have been learned. "Notts County can be taken forward in a manner that ensures the club does not go through this again," he says. The first bright spot on the horizon seems to be next summer, when most of the more outlandish players' contracts will expire and can be renegotiated at a much more realistic rate.

"Clubs can no longer continue to spend beyond their means," says Finnity, while pointing out that the consortium's business plan is "on the conservative side".

Relocation talks

Taylor, too, believes brighter times may well be around the corner, given the talk of a favourable deal being struck with the council to sell County's Meadow Lane site, relocate to a new stadium and still have a bit of spare change left at the end of it all.

"Some good people have come to the fore during all this upheaval," he says. "And it would be nice to think that County will never be as close to going out of business as they were this time. It's all a question of running the club based on the realities of where they find themselves."

Hopefully, that should not prove to be too much of a hardship for a club that have had a massive reality attack over the past 18 months. Forget all about those massive contracts. The new Notts County style is rather different, judging from the leaflets handed out at Meadow Lane in November.

"Since our resources are limited," they read, "we are calling for unpaid volunteers to help deal with some of the many tasks which we now have. We need painters, carpenters and tradesmen prepared to help restore the ground to its former glory."

A noble sentiment, but it will take more than a few cosmetic changes to ensure a healthy future for Notts County.

Give generously...voluntary contributions swelled the Supporters Trust fund

Tough at the top...United's Kleberson tussles with Chelsea match-winner Lampard

Chelsea leading big-three charge

Nobody else has the nous to challenge, says Gavin Hamilton

THIS YEAR'S PREMIERSHIP title race is a three-horse affair between Chelsea, Arsenal and Manchester United – with the rest chasing fourth place.

"Neither ourselves, Chelsea nor Arsenal are making huge mistakes. We are all looking very strong and that means when we play each other the games are vital. That is what may decide the League this season."

So said United manager Alex Ferguson before his team's visit to Stamford Bridge to play Chelsea in late November. He was less courteous afterwards. A 1-0 win, thanks to Frank Lampard's penalty, sent Chelsea clear at the top amid growing consensus that Claudio Ranieri's side have got what it takes to be serious contenders. As evidence, Chelsea have picked up narrow wins at Southampton and Everton – the sort of places where they have dropped points in the past.

Behind the big three, only Newcastle and Liverpool have the resources and ambition to challenge in the long term but have already lost touch with the leaders. The rest of the clubs appear happy just to be in the comfort zone, content to avoid the fate of Leeds, who, saddled with debts in excess of £80 million, slumped to the bottom, consumed by fears they may be forced into administration.

Amid the mediocrity of most of the Premiership, Fulham and Charlton had risen to fourth and fifth place respectively by the start of December.

While the efforts of Fulham's rookie manager Chris Coleman deserve recognition, his team have climbed the division thanks to the poor performances of supposedly 'bigger' sides such as Everton, Aston Villa and Blackburn.

The results of English teams in the UEFA Cup – Southampton and Manchester City went out in the first and second rounds respectively – suggest that the Premiership's middle-ranking clubs still have a lot to do.

Newcastle and Liverpool, who are still in the UEFA Cup, look the best bets for the fourth Champions League spot. Whether anybody else can rise above the ordinary and challenge them remains to be seen.

HOLLAND

Sneijder saves the day

Wesley strikes...Sneijder scores against Scotland in the play-off second leg in Amsterdam

DESPITE THRASHING SCOTLAND 6-1 on aggregate in the play-offs, reaching the Euro 2004 finals was a narrow escape for the Dutch national team. In the end an outstanding performance from a 19-year-old midfielder – Wesley Sneijder of Ajax – saved the country from the humiliation of failing to qualify for a second successive major tournament.

For the first leg, in Glasgow, coach Dick Advocaat had risked his credibility by starting with Ruud Van Nistelrooy and Patrick Kluivert up front, despite having vowed to never use this combination again because it had proved so ineffective. The pair's numerous goals in training persuaded him to change his mind, but it proved a mistake as the partnership once again failed.

The players also neglected Advocaat's tactics, leaving the team undermanned in midfield. The result was that Scotland dominated and deservedly took the lead in the 22nd minute. Holland were unable to repair the damage and, facing the second leg 1-0 down, were subjected to some harsh criticism from media and fans on their return home.

There were also renewed pleas to bring in some of the younger players. At last, Advocaat seemed to get the message and axed Frank De Boer and Kluivert from the starting line-up. In came Rafael Van der Vaart, Wilfred Bouma (a last-minute replacement for the suspended Jaap Stam) and Sneijder.

It was the latter's night. Not only did he score the opening goal, but he was also involved in four of the others, of which Van Nistelrooy scored three.

The 6-0 scoreline proved that Holland can still play marvellous football, but the times they do so are pretty scarce. In order to be serious Euro 2004 contenders, the younger players have to be brought in.

In the League, Rinus Israel has decided to quit Den Haag to coach Al Wahda, the club he took to the United Arab Emirates championship two years ago. Assistant Lex Schoenmaker will be his replacement at last season's Second Division champions.

Klaas-Jan Droppert

SWITZERLAND

Basle squash Grasshopper

BASLE TOOK REVENGE for their 1-0 Cup defeat by Grasshopper by routing their arch-rivals 5-2 in the penultimate League round before the winter break.

Under-21 striker Marco Streller was the star of the game, scoring twice, as his side stayed 12 points clear of nearest challengers Young Boys and went 30 ahead of Grasshopper, the defending champions. The Cup defeat, two weeks before, was Basle's first loss in 25 matches in any domestic competition.

Streller's Under-21 team-mate Johan Vonlanthen has said he would prefer to play for Colombia, where he spent his first 14 years, after being made only a substitute for the first leg of Switzerland's European Under-21 play-off tie against the Czech Republic. The 17-year-old PSV Eindhoven player refused to take his place on the bench, and instead watched the game from the stands.

This change of allegiance would be permitted under a planned FIFA rule offering dual-nationality youngsters the chance to make a final decision on their international future at the age of 21.

The Swiss won through to the Under-21 finals next May after beating the Czechs 4-3 on penalties following a 3-3 aggregate draw.

Ivar von Rulach

Change of heart...Johan Vonlanthen

BELGIUM

Pressure eases on Sollied

Key man...Lange scored Brugge's injury-time goal against Celta Vigo

A COUPLE OF Scandinavians used their heads to good effect for the two Belgian clubs hoping to reach the knockout stages of the Champions League.

Finnish international Hannu Tihinen nodded the 71st-minute goal that gave Anderlecht a 1-0 win over Lyon on matchday five and a fighting chance of making progress from Group A. The following night Norwegian substitute Rune Lange headed an injury-time goal to give Club Brugge a 1-1 draw against Celta Vigo and keep their hopes alive in Group H.

The Brugge result came as a source of great comfort for Lange's compatriot Trond Sollied, who had been feeling the pressure for the first time during his four years as coach. The champions were 13 points adrift of leaders Anderlecht in the League after 14 rounds.

Gent became the fifth top-flight side to change coach this season when dismissing Olde Riekerink. Herman Vermeulen, his assistant, has taken over as coach for the fifth time.

Fourth Division leaders Denderhoutem caused the biggest shock in the Cup when beating top division strugglers Mons 3-2.

Millen, another Fourth Division side, were permitted a replay of their tie at Lierse despite having lost 3-2. Lierse's late winner stemmed from a throw-in which had been conceded by Millen to allow one of their players to receive attention for an injury. After the game the two club presidents agreed on a rematch.

Nicholas Harling

PORTUGAL

Sporting suffer Cup upset

Sporting Lisbon were dumped out of the UEFA Cup after losing 3-0 at home to Turkish side Genclerbirligi. All the goals came in a seven-minute spell either side of half-time, killing off Sporting's chances. The first leg was a 1-1 draw.

There was better news for FC Porto, who reached the knockout stages of the Champions League after a 2-1 win over Partizan Belgrade.

Porto lead the domestic title race and were seven points ahead of closest challengers Sporting at the start of December. The defending champions maintained their superiority with a 4-1 win over Gil Vicente. Striker Derlei, the League's top marksman, was among the scorers for Porto.

Benfica, where Spanish coach Jose Antonio Camacho has been in charge for exactly a year, were a point behind Sporting in third place.

Luis Campos has returned for a second spell as coach of Gil Vicente in place of the sacked Mario Reis.

Serb Vladislav Bogicevic has replaced Manuel Jose at Belenenses.

John Holmesdale

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Shelbourne shape up

Long-time leaders Shelbourne survived a late challenge from defending champions Bohemians to secure the League title with two games to spare.

The Reds even briefly lost the lead to their challengers but secured the trophy after a string of victories. These included a 1-0 win at Bohemians in mid-November.

It is Shelbourne's third championship triumph in five seasons and their 11th in total, leaving them only four behind all-time leaders Shamrock Rovers.

Much of the credit for Shelbourne's success goes to striker Jason Byrne, who had hit 21 goals with one game to play. Byrne, a first cousin of Irish international forward Robbie Keane, was bought from Bray Wanderers in the close season. Shels' manager Pat Fenlon pulled off another masterstroke when bringing in utility player Jamie Harris from St Patrick's Athletic mid-term.

Shamrock Rovers goalkeeper Barry Ryan has been banned for 15 months after becoming the first Eircom League player to fail a drugs test. Ryan, who joined the Hoops from University College Dublin in the close season, has now been released by the club.

Nottingham Forest pair Andy Reid and John Thompson both made their senior debuts in the Republic's 3-0 win over Canada in a November friendly in Dublin.

Sean Creedon

AUSTRIA

Hormann signed as Salzburg saviour

Former Liechtenstein national team manager Walter Hormann has signed a one-year deal to take charge of struggling Salzburg, the club with whom he won the Austrian championship as a player in 1997.

"There is a lot of work ahead of us, but I am sure we will win again," said the 42-year-old former Austrian international, who joins from leading Liechtenstein club side Vaduz.

Hormann replaces Lars Sondergaard, who oversaw Salzburg's descent into crisis. The club lost 11 of their first 18 League games this season, leaving them second bottom, and were thrashed 9-0 on aggregate by Parma in the second round of the UEFA Cup.

The new man, who wore Salzburg's violet team jersey between 1996 and 1998, is already being seen as the club's saviour.

"The fans know and love him. I am sure he will cause a new boom," said sporting director Peter Assion.

It is Hormann's second coaching spell in Austria, having briefly taken charge of Austria Wien between August and December 2001, together with Anton Pfeffer. He was granted permission to leave Vaduz six months before his contract runs out in order to take up the Salzburg post.

Harry Miltner

LIECHTENSTEIN

Vaduz fight on

Vaduz, the Principality's leading side, are currently showing good form in the Swiss Second Division despite the departure to Salzburg of coach Walter Hormann and the absence of several first-team regulars. Paulo Vogt was the star of the 4-0 thrashing of Meyrin, scoring the first two goals.

Martin Andermatt, coach of Swiss side Wil 1900, and former Liechtenstein boss Ralf Loose are the favourites to replace Hormann.

Graeme Crawford

SWEDEN

Ijeh at eye of storm

THE TRANSFER OF Nigerian forward Peter Ijeh from Malmo to IFK Gothenburg has prompted a war of words between the clubs. Malmo have fiercely attacked their rivals for the way they conducted the deal, claiming they poached their top striker without properly consulting them.

"This was not very commendable behaviour from a club that has been learning the business for nearly a century," said Malmo chairman Bengt Madsen. "I put it down to the inexperience of Gothenburg's new leadership. Under their old board, nothing like this could have happened."

Gothenburg were quick to deny the accusations, saying Ijeh had been unsettled for some time. However, some of his new team-mates are puzzled by the transfer. They were recently ordered to take a wage cut, while Ijeh was already one of the League's biggest earners at Malmo.

Questions have also been raised about Ijeh's form. He was League top scorer with 24 goals in 2002, but had a far from successful season this year. He was sidelined by injury and then, having returned to action, failed to show any spark.

As expected, champions Djurgardens will be coached next season solely by Zoran Lukic after his co-coach, Soren Akerby, agreed to take the reins at AGF Aarhus in Denmark.

Orgryte have appointed their former player Jukka Ikalainen as coach. The Finn has also seen service as captain and manager of his national side.

Pentti Hietanen

Moving on...but Peter Ijeh's switch to Gothenburg has caused bitterness in Malmo

DENMARK

Laudrup lauded

Michael Laudrup celebrated being named Denmark's Coach of the Year by leading Brondby into the third round of the UEFA Cup after a penalty shoot-out triumph against Schalke. It was the best result for years by a Danish club in European competition, and indicative of the improvements inspired by Laudrup's attack-based regime.

There were many who doubted the former international's temperamental suitability for leadership, but after Brondby's narrow failure to win the title in his first season in charge, the sceptics have now melted away.

Laudrup particularly cherished the coaching award because it was voted for by his fellow Superliga managers.

As well as their European progress, Brondby were also sitting pretty at the top of the Superliga after 18 rounds, three points clear of Esbjerg and nine ahead of eternal rivals FC Copenhagen in third. The leaders twice came from behind at home in the big Copenhagen derby in round 17 to secure a 2-2 draw.

Jim Holden

FINLAND

Double delight for HJK

League champions HJK Helsinki bridged a 22-year gap by securing the Double as they came from behind to beat Allianssi 2-1 in the Cup Final. HJK were the last club to achieve the feat in 1981.

Allianssi must have thought the Cup was theirs when Mikko Paatelainen, younger brother of Mixu, put them ahead with 10 minutes left. But HJK equalised through Juho Makela before Joakim Jensen secured victory in extra-time with a controversial 'golden-goal' penalty. It was awarded after Makela had appeared to trip over his own feet rather than be fouled.

TPS Turku snapped up Hungarian striker Gabor Szilagay from KooTeePee Kotka, who were relegated after losing to RoPS Rovaniemi in the play-offs. RoPS join second level champions TP-47 Tornio in the top flight next season.

Pentti Hietanen

ICELAND

Clean sheets of San Francisco

The national squad hit San Francisco for an invitation friendly against Mexico missing no fewer than 14 first-team regulars – out either due to injury or a reluctance by their clubs to release them for a trip halfway round the world for a game in which there was little at stake but pride.

However, the match – a 0-0 draw – gave joint coaches Asgeir Sigurvinsson and Logi Olafsson a useful opportunity to blood some fringe players and introduce some members of the Under-21 side. Defender Kristjan Orn Sigurdsson, striker Bjorgolfur Takefusa and attacking midfielder Olafur Ingi Skulason all made their senior debuts.

Rab Christie

ESTONIA

Flora finish on a high

League champions Flora Tallinn rounded off an excellent season by beating Cup holders Tallinna VMK 3-1 after extra-time in the Supercup.

Flora, who had won the championship with two games to spare, ended the campaign unbeaten and broke three League records – points (76), wins (24) and goals (105). Forward Tor Henning Hamre scored 39 goals, also a League record.

Sunderland goalkeeper Mart Poom has been voted Estonian Player of the Year for the sixth time.

Andres Must

WALES

Hughes carries on

Mark Hughes has vowed to stay on as national coach after speculation that he would quit following Wales' failure to reach the Euro 2004 finals.

Hughes had been linked with a number of club jobs despite having a contract with Wales until 2006. He left it a week after his side's 1-0 aggregate defeat by Russia in the play-offs before saying: "It was so disappointing and everyone just needed to go away and take stock. But now we must look forward, not back.

"We have made great strides in a short time, we have shown we can compete at the highest level and have a lot of young players who will be better for the experience."

Wales were on the road to automatic qualification for the finals after winning their first four games, including a 2-1 home victory over group favourites Italy. However, they took only one point from their last four ties to slip into the runners-up berth.

In the League, Rhyl ended Total Network Solutions' 11-game winning run since the start of the season with a 3-2 victory on their rivals' turf. TNS's stumbles continued when they could only draw next time out – away to Connah's Quay Nomads. Rhyl, meanwhile, beat Cwmbran 1-0 at home then won 3-2 at Bangor City to cut TNS's lead to one point.

Mel Thomas

NORTHERN IRELAND

Seydak sacked

Eddie Seydak became the first managerial casualty of the season when sacked by Limavady United. In just over four years, the Scotsman took the unfashionable north-western club from obscurity to the Premier Division at the end of last season. However, that achievement counted for nothing after the team began this term by taking only three points from their first six matches.

Seydak has now taken a coaching role at another Premier Division side, Institute of Londonderry; his replacement at Limavady is ex-Northern Ireland goalkeeper Tommy Wright.

Coleraine chairman David Cameron has resigned in the face of a threatened strike by players over unpaid wages.

The CIS League Cup, the first trophy of the season, was fought out between two unlikely contenders – Cliftonville and Larne. The Final was played in atrocious conditions but the two sides served up an exciting game, with Cliftonville winning on penalties after a 1-1 draw at Windsor Park. It was a night to remember for 35-year-old Cliftonville captain and full-back Mickey Donnelly, playing his 600th game for the club he joined in 1988.

Roy Kitson

Vogts accentuates the positives

Shellshocked...Barry Ferguson and Lee Wilkie suffer in Amsterdam

SCOTLAND

NATIONAL COACH Berti Vogts expressed faith in his young Scotland side in the wake of their 6-0 thrashing by Holland in Amsterdam in the Euro 2004 play-offs, four days after they had beaten the Dutch 1-0 in Glasgow.

"You get good days and bad days," said Vogts. "But the players are young and their confidence will come back."

The German, whose contract runs until 2006, admitted his team had been outclassed in the second leg, saying: "We must learn from this style of football. That was international quality. The Dutch were great."

On the home front, Dundee have become the latest victims of the financial crisis afflicting Scottish club football, going into administration with reported debts of £20 million. As a consequence, 15 players have been sacked.

The club had demonstrated their ambition through the purchase of high-profile international stars such as Italian Fabrizio Ravanelli. However, it became clear that they did not have the income-generating capacity to sustain the wages of such individuals, and have been losing £100,000 a week.

Alan Fairley

No Euro glory...Nils Johan Semb

NORWAY

Semb leaves on a low

NILS JOHAN SEMB remained true to his word, stepping down as national coach after six years following the 5-1 aggregate defeat by Spain in the Euro 2004 play-offs.

He had promised to quit if Norway failed to make it to Portugal, or at the end of their finals campaign if they did. But all hope of the team being involved next summer disappeared during their comprehensive 3-0 second-leg home defeat.

Norway had hopes after limiting Spain to a 2-1 win in the first leg in Valencia, even though they were outplayed. But the humiliating defeat in Oslo meant Semb left on a low.

Semb said: "We will continue to qualify for future tournaments, but nobody can expect a small country like ours to do this on a regular basis."

Rosenborg coach Age Hareide has asked to be released from his contract in order to take up an offer to succeed Semb. Hareide made the news public on the eve of the domestic Double winners' second-leg UEFA Cup victory away to Red Star Belgrade which brought them a 1-0 aggregate win.

In the League play-offs, Valerenga retained their top-flight place with a 5-3 aggregate victory over second-level Sandefjord.

Sigurd Odegaard

Caught on the hop...Latvia's Vitalijs Astafjevs hurdles Nihat Kahveci in the Euro 2004 play-off in Istanbul

TURKEY

Heroes to zeros

JUST OVER A year after the glory of reaching the World Cup semi-finals, Turkey's national team are now exploring depths they thought they had left well behind them after losing to Latvia in the Euro 2004 play-offs.

"From third in the world to Third World," was one of the more charitable headlines in Turkish papers the day after the team had been held to a 2-2 draw in Istanbul following Latvia's shock 1-0 first-leg win in Riga.

Even political columnists began to attack the team, criticising the culture of blame, excuses and paranoia that had surrounded the qualification rounds, with officials looking to 'foreign plots' rather than admitting arrogance, bad player choices and a lack of fighting spirit had contributed to Turkey's ultimate undoing.

But despite the media mauling, coach Senol Gunes has not resigned and insists he will carry on. In any case, the twin suicide bombings that hit Istanbul the day after the second leg muted much of the reaction as the country found that there were much worse things to cry about.

The bombs also had a direct effect on Turkish football, as UEFA moved the Champions League clashes between Galatasaray and Juventus, and Besiktas and Chelsea to neutral grounds for fear Istanbul could face further attacks.

Amid the gloom, two Turkish teams managed to get through to the third round of the UEFA Cup against much more prestigious opponents. Gaziantepspor crushed Lens 6-1 on aggregate, while an Ali Tandogan-inspired Genclerbirligi stunned Sporting Lisbon 3-0 in Portugal following a 1-1 draw in Ankara.

In the League, the ring still belongs to Besiktas, who remained unbeaten after 14 rounds. The defending champions' 2-2 draw at Istanbul rivals Fenerbahce kept them six points clear of closest challengers Trabzonspor.

Suna Erdem

CROATIA

Baric beleaguered despite win

A campaign has been launched to oust Otto Baric as national coach despite the 70-year-old having just guided Croatia into the Euro 2004 finals via a play-off against Slovenia.

But critics point to the narrowness of the team's victory – 2-1 on aggregate – as evidence of Baric's failings. They feel that Croatia's players are much better than Slovenia's and therefore the win should have been more decisive.

The coach's opponents have put forward the name of former national team captain Zvonimir Boban as a potential successor. Since the end of his playing career, Boban has played no part in football, opting to concentrate on his history studies. However, those who know him well claim he has ambitions to take a top job within Croatian football.

Zdravko Reic

SLOVENIA

Prasnikar: 'My team don't play enough'

National coach Bojan Prasnikar has admitted that his players' lack of first-team football at club level was a major factor in Slovenia's 2-1 aggregate defeat by Croatia in the Euro 2004 play-offs.

"Our players based abroad are mainly substitutes and it was hard for them to play two such hard matches in just four days," he said. "Besides that, our squad is significantly weaker than Croatia's."

Slovenia drew 1-1 in Zagreb, but lost 1-0 in the return.

Meanwhile, Slovenia's best player Zlatko Zahovic has said he will not play for the team again following their failure to reach the finals.

Zdravko Reic

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Mum's the word for Blaz

National coach Blaz Sliskovic has said he is adopting a cloak-and-dagger approach in seeking out new talents for fear that other countries will 'steal' the players for their national teams.

"I must work in secrecy because in numerous European clubs a complete generation is ripening, a generation that was forced into exile

Bad end to a bad year

Towering success...Red Star striker Nikola Zigic

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

ILIJA PETKOVIC was confirmed as the new national coach early in November, having managed to turn the team's fortunes around in his four months as caretaker. Serbia & Montenegro played well in their last three Euro 2004 qualifiers – against Wales (1-0 and 3-2) and Italy (1-1) – following a disappointing start to the campaign under Dejan Savicevic.

However, they were beaten 4-3 in Poland in the last international of the year and finished 2003 with the poor record of two wins, two draws and six defeats.

Red Star beat Partizan with unexpected ease in the 121st Belgrade derby, 23-year-old Nikola Zigic scoring twice in the 3-0 win. The 6ft 7in striker, dubbed the 'Serbian Jan Koller', has been the discovery of the season, having scored 10 League goals and six in the UEFA Cup.

The victory put Red Star six points clear of Partizan, the defending champions, but in the next round their 1-0 defeat at OFK Belgrade, coupled with Partizan's 3-1 home win over Radnicki Obrenovac, cut the gap. In between the two were Sartid Smederevo, trailing Red Star on goal difference.

Partizan were knocked out of the Champions League following a 2-1 defeat at FC Porto on the fifth matchday. In the UEFA Cup, Red Star lost 1-0 at home to Rosenborg following a 0-0 draw in Trondheim.

Vladimir Novak

ISRAEL

Nimni leaves after bust-up

Premier League leaders Maccabi Tel Aviv have parted company with attacking midfielder Avi Nimni, a club idol for well over a decade. Nimni has joined Beitar Jerusalem three months after a bitter bust-up with Maccabi coach Nir Klinger.

Jerusalem's Teddy stadium was packed to witness Nimni's opening game for Beitar, against SC Ashdod, and he did not disappoint. The new signing got the crowd on their feet after just four minutes by scoring the only goal of the game. Despite the win, Beitar were still mired in the relegation zone.

Maccabi Tel Aviv also took the opportunity to dispose of former captain Tal Banin. He is now at Bnei Yehuda, who are enjoying one of their best campaign starts for several years and were just two points behind Maccabi after nine rounds.

The absence of Banin and Nimni was hardly evident as the leaders cruised to an easy 2-0 derby victory over Hapoel Tel Aviv.

Derek Fattal

from Bosnia-Herzegovina together with their parents 10 years ago [at the time of the civil war]," says Sliskovic.

Although the players may have been born in Bosnia, they are likely to be able to appear for their new country or one of the other states that used to form Yugoslavia.

Already, Boris Zivkovic has opted to play for Croatia, and is now captain, while Bosnia have also lost the potential services of the likes of Igor Musa, Nino Bule, Mario Bazina and Stanko Bubalo to their near neighbours.

In the League, Siroki Brijeg went into the winter break on top, a point clear of defending champions Leotar.

Zdravko Reic

GREECE

Olympiakos make their point

League leaders Olympiakos had to come from behind to secure a home draw against arch-rivals and closest challengers Panathinaikos in their late November clash.

The Piraeus club, champions for the past seven seasons, fell behind to a 36th-minute goal from Cypriot striker Michalis Constantinou. However, an equaliser on the hour from Ieroklis Stoltidis ensured that Olympiakos maintained their two-point lead.

Iraklis, struggling to make headway in the League, have sacked Dutch coach Gene Gerards.

Lou Economopoulos

MACEDONIA

Stratev stays on

Zoran Stratev has been persuaded not to resign as coach of champions Vardar following a meeting with club officials. He had been on the verge of quitting after his team, the long-time League leaders, suffered a poor run of results that left them fourth in the table.

"I think it would be unfair to the club, the sponsor and the players to leave now, in the middle of the season," said Stratev.

Zikica Tasevski has been appointed coach of promoted Madzari Solidarnost after Vanco Balevski resigned because club president Zoran Mirkovic refused to back him during a dispute with the players.

Dragan Tomovski has stepped down at Cup-holders Cementarnica 55 for unspecified reasons.

Michel Stojmanovski

On target...Michalis Constantinou

MALTA

Heese rings the changes

New national coach Horst Heese included a number of new faces in announcing his first full squad.

Birkirkara goalkeeper Justin Haber and midfielder team-mate Roderick Briffa, Floriana defender Ian Azzopardi and Sliema Wanderers' Kevin Sammut all stepped up from the Under-21 side, while Ivan Woods (Pieta Hotspurs), Claude Mattocks (Floriana) and Jamie Pace (Sliema) also got the call. The German coach dropped defenders Darren Debono and Brian Said, plus Jonathan Holland, David Camilleri, Malcolm Licari and both Adrian and Miguel Mifsud. Striker Michael Mifsud kept his place in the squad, despite being released by his Bundesliga club Kaiserslautern.

In the League, Birkirkara beat Pieta 5-1 to stay top with 24 points, two ahead of Hibernians.

Nigerian signing Anthony Evi Parker gave lowly Balzan Youths an instant return, scoring both their goals in the 2-2 draw with Floriana to lift them to third from bottom.

Domenico Aquilina

Gazzayev gives way to Jorge

RUSSIA

CSKA MOSCOW got a new manager just two weeks after winning their first Russian League championship. Artur Jorge, the former boss of Portugal and Switzerland, replaced Valeri Gazzayev, who also stepped down as Russia coach in August.

The 57-year-old Portuguese summoned his new squad from their winter vacations to a 12-day training camp in Turkey. He then surprised the Army team players even more by shaving off his famous thick moustache just before their first meeting. The joke going round was that Jorge had done it in order to avoid resemblance to the unpopular Gazzayev, who also sported a moustache.

Jorge, previously also in charge of club sides such as Porto, PSG and Benfica, aims to introduce a more passing style of play at CSKA and make them more competitive.

Georgi Yartsev, Gazzayev's successor at the national team helm, received the plaudits at a reception with President Vladimir Putin after steering Russia to the Euro 2004 finals via a 1-0 aggregate play-off win over Wales.

Victor Gusev

Nice work...Yartsev receives an award from President Putin for taking Russia to the Euro 2004 finals

POLAND

Janas relieved by friendly wins

Hemmed in...Poland were too good for Cristiano Zanetti and Italy in Warsaw

NATIONAL COACH Pawel Janas, under pressure after failing to lead Poland to the Euro 2004 finals, gained some relief after his side won home friendlies against Italy and Serbia & Montenegro in November.

A 3-1 victory in Warsaw was their first over Italy for 18 years. "That was just amazing," said Janas, who picked out wingers Kamil Kosowski and Jacek Krzynowek for special praise.

He was less complimentary four days later after a 4-3 win against Serbia & Montenegro in Plock, saying: "I am happy only with the result. The defence made too many mistakes."

Defending champions Wisla Krakow topped the table at the halfway point of the season, one point clear of Amica Wronki. At the bottom, Swit Nowy Dwor were still without a win after 13 games and had just four points.

In the UEFA Cup, provincial Groclin Dyskobolia claimed a notable scalp by knocking out Kevin Keegan's Manchester City on away goals. The club, in their first foray in Europe, followed the 1-1 draw in Manchester with a 0-0 draw at their tiny stadium in Grodzisk Wielkopolski to go through to the third round.

Dariusz Kurowski

UKRAINE

Shakhtar top for spring

Shakhtar Donetsk went into the winter break three points clear of defending champions Kyiv Dynamo and still unbeaten after 15 matches.

Shakhtar president Rinat Akhmetov has announced plans for a new £63million stadium, while former head coach Victor Prokopenko has returned to the club as technical director after a year at Dinamo Moscow.

Kyiv Dynamo have signed 19-year-old Lithuania midfielder Edgaras Cesnauskis from Ekranas on a five-year contract.

Vorskla fired Russian coach Oleg Dolmatov after a shock 5-0 Cup defeat by lowly Illichivets. Kryvbas are also looking for a new boss following the departure of Volodymyr Muntyan.

Oleg Zadernovsky

ROMANIA

Anghel in tight corner

National coach Anghel Iordanescu has come under renewed fire after Romania's 1-0 defeat by Italy in a friendly in Ancona in mid-November.

The fans, press and even some of his own players criticised the boss, who is still smarting from the failure to guide Romania to the Euro 2004 finals. Captain Cristian Chivu, who missed the game through injury, said: "It was a mistake to play our defenders in a line against fast Italian players."

Iordanescu defended himself against critics who say the team's style of play is old-fashioned, saying: "If we had a new Marius Lacatus, a new Gheorghe Hagi and a new Ilie Dumitrescu, our style would be different."

Coincidentally, Hagi has returned to Romania from Turkey after resigning as Bursaspor coach following poor results.

Radu Timofte

CZECH REPUBLIC

FA has designs on stadium

The Czech Republic's success in qualifying for the Euro 2004 finals has revived interest in the building of a new national stadium.

The FA has proposed reconstructing Prague's Evzen Rosicky stadium – occupied by Slavia Prague – as a 52,000-capacity facility. At present, the national team play most of their games at Sparta Prague's Letna stadium (now known as the Toyota Arena), which can accommodate only 18,500.

The Czech Republic rounded off their successful year by sweeping aside Canada 5-1 in a low-key friendly in Teplice. The result extended the unbeaten run under coach Karel Bruckner to 19 games, while Karel Poborsky equalled Zdenek Nehoda's record of 90 national team appearances.

Sam Beckwith

SLOVAKIA

Galis back to the future

The FA took a step into the past by replacing national team manager Ladislav Jurkemik with former Slovakia boss Dusan Galis.

The latter was first in charge between December 1998 and February 1999 before resigning, claiming he had been unable to work with FA chief Frantisek Laurinec. This time, Galis has been given a two-year contract, taking him to the end of the World Cup qualifiers.

The 54-year-old, who led Slovan Bratislava to a Slovak and a Czechoslovak League title, said he would be willing to work with any player. This referred to the several Slovak internationals who had refused to play for Jurkemik because of reported personal conflicts.

Ed Holt

HUNGARY

Gellei goes

Hungary coach Imre Gellei stood down after his side were surprisingly beaten 1-0 at home by Estonia in a November friendly. The defeat came on the back of an ultimately disappointing Euro 2004 qualifying campaign.

Unfancied Balaton FC led the League at the halfway stage having put together a string of impressive results. The modest team from the tacky lakeside resort of Siofok have been boosted by crucial goals from top scorer Csaba Csordas, and impressive away form, including a 1-0 win over Ferencvaros

Peterjon Cresswell

BELARUS

Gomel take first title

FC Gomel won the championship for the first time, finishing eight points clear of defending champions BATE Borisov.

Gomel not only boasted the tightest defence – only 12 goals conceded in 30 games – but also had the League's top scorer in Genadz Blizniuk. He hit 18 goals, the same tally as Dinamo Minsk's Siorgei Kornilenko.

Dinamo finished third – then sacked coach Anatoly Baidachnyi.

Vladimir Kalinkovich

KAZAKHSTAN

Hat-trick for Irtysh

Irtysh Pavlodar won the League for the third year running, finishing two points clear of Tobol after a 2-1 win at home to Kaisar on the final day.

Tobol also missed out on the Cup, losing 3-1 to Kairat in the Final. Arsen Tlehugov grabbed a hat-trick, two from the penalty spot.

Vladimir Kalinkovich

Victory dance...matchwinner Manchev is hugged by his team-mates

BULGARIA

Manchev secures Seoul victory

THE NATIONAL TEAM began their build-up to the Euro 2004 finals by beating South Korea 1-0 in Seoul in mid-November. Forward Vladimir Manchev, one of Bulgaria's most impressive performers, scored the winner in the 19th minute after being set up by Velizar Dimitrov.

Coach Plamen Markov, forced to draft in a number of inexperienced players because of injuries to regular first-teamers, said: "The win is a big boost to our confidence."

Markov was particularly impressed by debutant forward Zdravko Lazarov, currently in prolific form for Turkish side Gaziantepspor.

Michael Bowesfield

Boca back on top

ARGENTINA

Taking it easy...Boca's Nicolas Burdisso and Carlos Tevez celebrate their championship win

BOCA JUNIORS won the opening championship with two games to spare having led from the start. They clinched the title with a 2-1 victory over Arsenal while closest rivals San Lorenzo were losing 1-0 to Gimnasia y Esgrima de La Plata.

It was coach Carlos Bianchi's sixth League championship – four with Boca and two with Velez Sarsfield – and Boca's first since taking the 2000 opening title.

Although the team won comfortably enough, they rarely showed their full potential. Boca looked at their best when playing Guillermo Barros Schelotto, Carlos Tevez and Brazilian Iarley in attack, but this combination was not often available because of injuries to the first two. The squad's limitations were shown by their Sudamericana Cup exit, when a second-string team lost 5-1 on aggregate to Colombia's Atletico Nacional in the quarter-finals.

Boca's League run-in included a 2-0 win at arch-rivals and 2003 closing champions River Plate, a result that almost cost River coach Manuel Pellegrini his job. His team had a poor campaign – taking only 19 points from their first 16 games – having sold key players Andres D'Alessandro and Martin Demichelis and been deprived of international veterans Marcelo Gallardo and Marcelo Salas for most of the season through injury. On top of that, defender Nelson Vivas announced his retirement after becoming the focus of fans' discontent.

Tevez did not play against River, having been injured the week before against Independiente. With the youngster set to be sidelined for five weeks, it appeared to have settled the wrangle over whether or not he would travel to represent Argentina at the World Youth Cup in the United Arab Emirates.

Not surprisingly, Boca wanted him to remain with them in the hope he would recover in time for the World Club Cup tie against Milan in Yokohama on December 14. However, he was selected for the Under-20 team and under an FA rule, backed by FIFA, if a player is picked for a national team and refuses the invitation, he cannot play for his club during the course of the national team's tournament.

Tevez, pushed by the club, went to court to secure an order allowing him to play for the team of his choice – Boca. But, despite his injury, the FA kept his name on the official squad list for the World Youth Cup and in the end opted to travel with 19 players rather than name a replacement.

FIFA president Sepp Blatter was visibly annoyed at the tournament's opening press conference, saying: "This player [Tevez] withdrew at the last moment and, to make things worse, took his case to a local court. If he does not have a valid reason, he could end up playing his football at a disciplinary committee or on the moon."

Ariel Ortega, another player who has got on the wrong side of FIFA, has said he has no alternative but to hang up his boots since he cannot afford the £6.9 million compensation fee to release him from his contract with Fenerbahce. He was ordered to pay it before being allowed to join another team after he walked out on the Turkish club, citing irrevocable differences.

"I cannot pay that sort of money," said the 29-year-old, who has won 86 caps. "The only thing I can do is stop playing football. It's over and that's it."

Ortega joined Fenerbahce in June 2002 from River Plate on a four-year contract, but played fewer than 20 games.

Eric Weil

ROUND-UP

● **URUGUAY:** Veteran Paraguayan keeper Jose Luis Chilavert scored from a free-kick in Penarol's 5-2 win over Deportivo Colonia to help put his side on the road to the closing championship and consolidate his new-found idol status at the club. At the request of fans, Chilavert is now the No 1 choice to take Penarol's free-kicks and penalties, in place of another veteran idol, Pablo Bengoechea.

The win over Deportivo put Penarol five points clear at the top, and they clinched the title four days later with a 1-0 win at River Plate. Earlier, they had beaten Nacional 3-1 in the big Montevideo derby. Chilavert also found the net from a free-kick in that game, though it was disallowed because he shot before the referee had indicated he could take it.

● **COLOMBIA:** Two fans were killed and 34 injured when a section of seats collapsed at Atletico Junior's Roberto Melendez stadium in Barranquilla as supporters celebrated their team's qualification for the closing championship play-offs.

● **ECUADOR:** Barcelona, the country's most popular club, have been declared insolvent after failing to pay a debt of £75,000 to former striker Washington Aires.

● **CHILE:** Crowd violence stopped the first leg of the closing championship play-off tie between hosts Universidad Catolica and Santiago Wanderers. The game was halted with five minutes remaining as visiting fans knocked down part of the fencing surrounding the pitch. Universidad were leading 4-1 at the time.

● **BOLIVIA:** Independiente Petrolero were controversially relegated by the League after their players walked off during a relegation play-off against Guabira when defender Cecilio Pena was injured by a stone thrown by a fan. However, the League said: "The team walked off when conditions made it possible to continue the game."

● **PARAGUAY:** Libertad won the closing championship after beating Olimpia on penalties in a special closing championship play-off. The game, which finished goalless after regulation time, was staged after the sides finished level on points.

Libertad's victory makes them automatic national champions, since they also won the opening tournament. Their success is built on the excellence of goalkeeper Justo Villar (who succeeded Jose Luis Chilavert in the national team), a strong, tough-tackling defence and wily midfielders Derlis Soto and Carlos Bonet (see profile, page 77).

Libertad qualify for the Libertadores Cup, along with Guarani, who won the second-most points in the season as a whole, and Olimpia, who beat Cerro Porteno 2-0 in a play-off.

Olimpia's progress did not prevent chairman Osvaldo Dominguez Dibb from voicing some extraordinary criticism of his team. "Some players dedicate themselves too much to sex and alcohol, and even come drunk to training," he claimed.

Meanwhile, Olimpia's Argentinian defender Gaston Cordoba has been banned for 18 months for attacking an opponent in the tunnel before the play-off with Libertad. The punishment was so severe because Cordoba did not attend the disciplinary hearing.

● **VENEZUELA:** Deportivo Tachira extended their unbeaten opening championship record to 13 games and led defending champions Caracas by five points with five games to play.

● **COPA AMERICA:** The United States have turned down an invitation to play in next year's South American championship because of World Cup qualifying commitments.

Eric Weil

Punch-up punishment...Gaston Cordoba

Strike forces early closing

PERU

THE CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP has been cancelled with seven rounds to play because no resolution could be found to a three-week player strike over unpaid wages. The dispute had already forced clubs to field amateur sides, but even some of these games were prevented from going ahead after the protesting players stepped up their industrial action.

On the first weekend of the strike, Atletico Universitario players arrived early at their stadium and locked all the gates, so that nobody – including the amateur team of opponents Sporting Cristal – could get into the ground. The Sport Boys-Alianza Atletico match had to be called off after the players' union organised pickets at approaches to the stadium, while Cienciano's professionals took to the field against Alianza Lima's amateurs dressed in street clothes and refused to play.

In light of the closing tournament cancellation, the federation has announced that opening winners Sporting Cristal will represent Peru in the Libertadores Cup, along with Alianza Lima, the side with most points from both tournaments when the closing was curtailed. The criteria for determining the country's third representatives have yet to be decided.

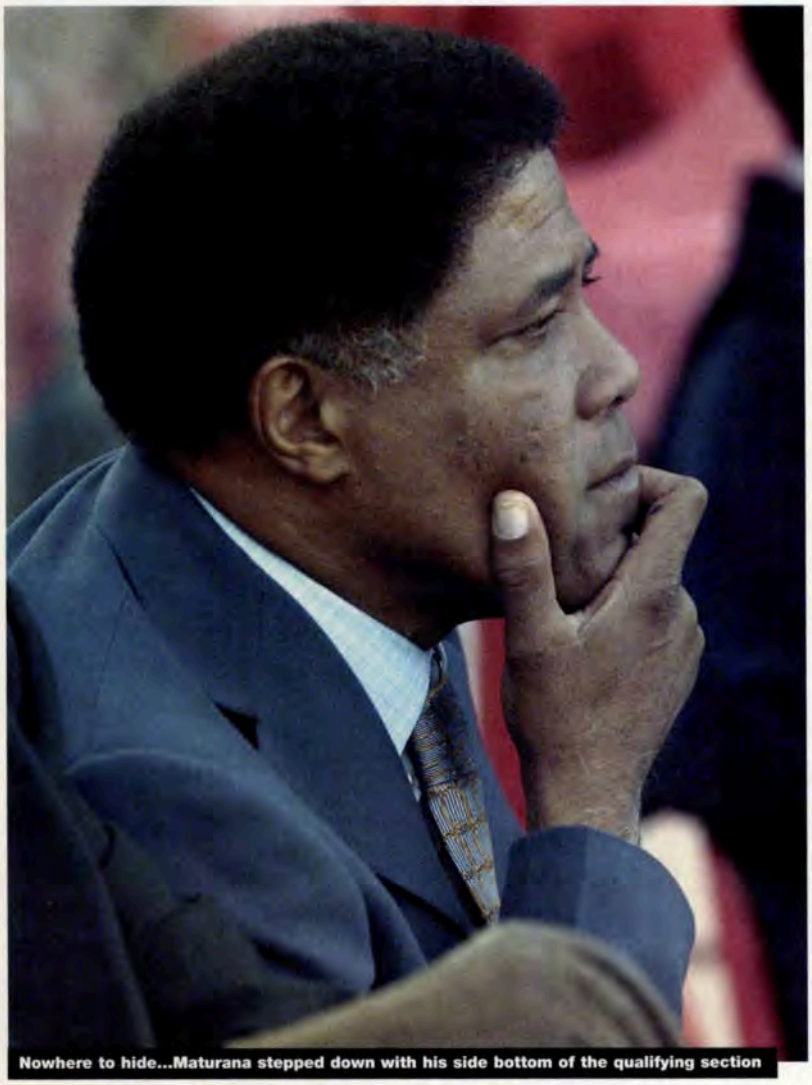
LDU Quito, the club most in debt to their players, have appointed their fifth coach in a year. Former midfielder Juan Jose Ore has been brought in to replace Roberto Martinez, who walked out after only a month in view of the club's dire financial situation.

Eric Weil

Maturana quits

WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

A home humiliation by Venezuela spelt the end for the Colombia coach



Nowhere to hide...Maturana stepped down with his side bottom of the qualifying section

FRANCISCO MATURANA'S latest stint in charge of Colombia ended with his resignation a week after a home defeat by Venezuela in the November World Cup qualifiers. The 1-0 loss in Barranquilla was the team's third out of three, leaving them rooted to the bottom of the qualifying table. Ironically, Maturana – who took Colombia to the 1990 and 1994 World Cup finals – stepped down just after his side had won their first point and had the better of a 1-1 draw with Argentina, also in Barranquilla.

Gabriel Camargo, the federation's vice-president, said: "The truth is that his time with the team is over."

Former Colombia defender Jorge Bermudez added: "Our soccer has gone out of fashion. We play the same way as 15 years ago. But the disorganisation starts with the officials, and I can't see us making the World Cup."

Venezuela, on the other hand, are making tremendous progress – they beat Bolivia 2-1 at home three days after the Colombia victory – and can even be considered outside candidates for a qualifying place. Only they and Paraguay gained maximum points from the two latest qualifying matchdays.

Paraguay head the South American section by a point from Argentina and Brazil. The Paraguayans are hard to beat, even when not playing well. They carved out a 2-1 win over a spirited Ecuador in Asuncion and then scrambled a 1-0 win away to Chile despite having to defend in numbers at times.

The best game was the Brazil-Uruguay 3-3 draw in Curitiba (see Dispatches, page 24). It was Brazil's second successive draw after being held 1-1 by Peru in Lima three days earlier.

Uruguay struggled to beat Chile 2-1 in Montevideo, where a blunder by keeper Nelson Tapia gifted Adrian Romero the winner.

Argentina, runaway winners of the last qualifying tournament, shook themselves out of their early lethargy this time round to beat a weak Bolivia 3-0 in Buenos Aires. But they were lucky to get away with the 1-1 draw in Colombia despite taking the lead through Hernan Crespo. Coach Marcelo Bielsa still refuses to field more than one striker, and while Andres D'Alessandro and Pablo Aimar linked well in midfield against Bolivia, Bielsa did not play them together in Colombia.

Eric Weil

BOLIVIA

Shellshocked Acosta on the ropes

BOLIVIA COACH Nelson Acosta is increasingly giving the impression of a man who has bitten off more than he can chew. Acosta, who led Chile to the 1998 World Cup in France, took over his new post in July hoping to produce a repeat with the landlocked Andean nation. It appears he may have overestimated Bolivia's potential.

Venezuela's improvement has left Bolivia as the continent's weakest team – and over-dependent on playing home games in La Paz, 12,500ft above sea level.

After watching a few local matches, Acosta was shocked at the standard of play. "The dynamics are different here," he said. "The players fall to the ground, pass the ball sideways, they don't play quickly and opponents sit back. The competition is weak, and the players aren't to blame because nothing is demanded of them. If you're happy with that, no problem, but it doesn't give us any chance of competing abroad."

Acosta criticised club directors for refusing to release players for a training camp. "They can't keep changing the rules every time there's a match," he said. "The national team deserves a certain amount of respect."

The coach's worst fears came true as Bolivia were hammered 5-0 by Uruguay in their opening World Cup qualifier in September. Four days later, they recovered to beat Colombia 4-0 in La Paz, but then lost 3-0 to Argentina in Buenos Aires in mid-November. Acosta's task for the latter game was made all the harder when burglars raided his house and stole a laptop which included tactical plans and dossiers on the opposition.

If the coach wanted proof his luck was out, it came in Venezuela three days after the Argentina defeat. Joaquin Botero put Bolivia ahead on the hour, a goal that seemed to have secured a rare away win until Jose Manuel Rey equalised in the 90th minute and Juan Arango scored the home side's winner in injury time.

Acosta vowed to stay on, but warned he would not be gagged. "If I have to say that some things aren't right, I will," he said. "I'm carrying on – in spite of everything."

Brian Homewood

DALLAS CUP

Share your memories of a great tournament

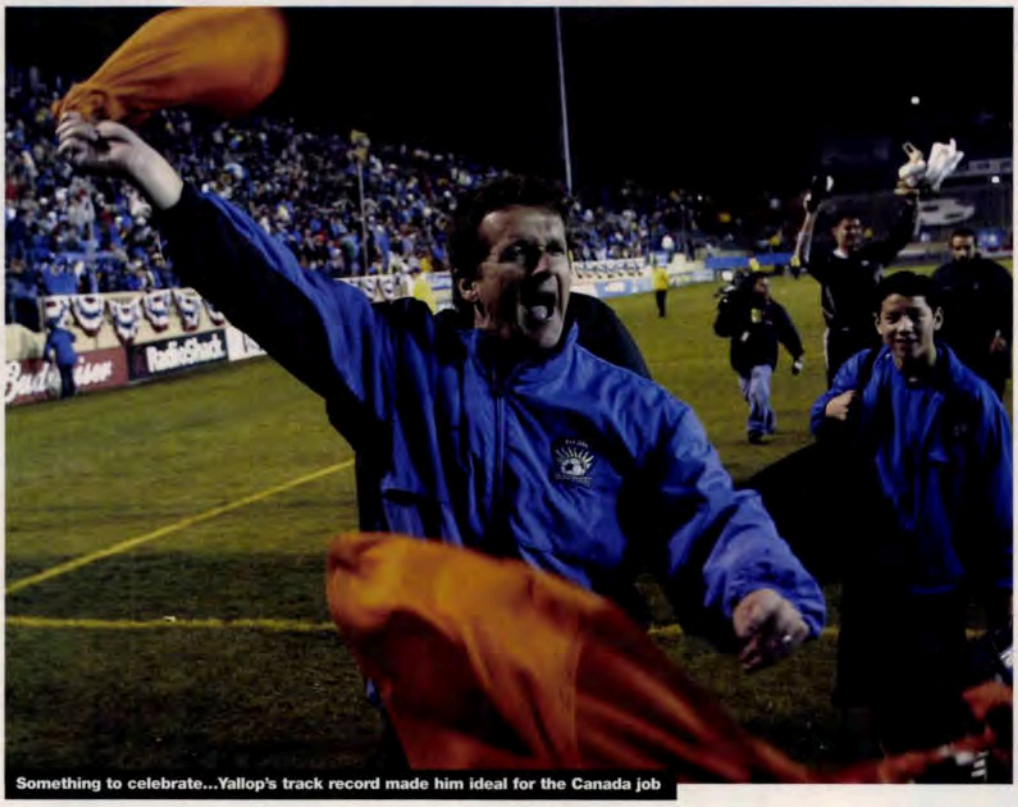
AS PART OF preparations for the 25th edition of the Dallas Cup, the organisers are trying to trace former players, coaches, referees and volunteers who have taken part in the youth tournament.

The Dallas Cup's silver jubilee is in April next year and organisers are hoping others will follow in the footsteps of David Beckham. In his latest book, the England captain recalls his first trip to the USA was as a teenager to play in Dallas Cup XII for an Essex Schools team.

His fondest memories are of the tournament's 'HomeStay Program' and his week lodging with a local family. "The first people I stayed with were Mexican and really nice," he says. "They were mad about soccer and couldn't do enough for me. All my Essex team-mates were staying in these huge houses and being driven around in huge cars. We'd just get in the pick-up and drive down to McDonald's for breakfast every morning. I had such a great week with that family; I find myself thinking about them even now."

Tournament manager Randy Jones says: "We would love to hear from participants who would like to share their memories of the Dallas Cup."

Randy can be contacted by e-mail at: **randy@dallascup.com.**



Something to celebrate...Yallop's track record made him ideal for the Canada job

CANADA

Yes to Yallop

FRANK YALLOP has been named national team head coach, confounding the widespread belief that the Canadian Soccer Association would appoint another European to succeed German Holger Osieck.

The England-born former Canadian international fitted the CSA's criteria to a T. "We were looking for an individual with a proven track record of success at the elite level and rock-solid playing background who knows the situation within CONCACAF and has the know-how to work with modern-day players," said chief operating officer Kevan Pipe.

Yallop, who grew up on Canada's west coast, arrives fresh from leading San Jose Earthquakes to the MLS championship, repeating the feat he achieved with the club two years ago. He won 52 caps between 1990 and 1997 and spent 16 seasons with Ipswich in England before ending his playing career in MLS at Tampa Bay Mutiny.

The 39-year-old became assistant to Mutiny's Dutch coach Thomas Rongen in 1996, and followed him to DC United four years later. Yallop took over at San Jose in January 2001, and was named MLS Coach of the Year a few months later, after the club's first championship success.

Yallop has a little time to settle in since Canada's World Cup qualifying campaign does not get under way until next June. And he can begin in the knowledge that he has plenty of support. Bob Lenarduzzi, Yallop's boss when playing for the national team, says: "Frank has shown as a player he could organise and pass on information to others on the field, so it is no surprise to me he also has had success as a coach."

Philippe Germain

MEXICO

Tribute to Campos

VETERAN KEEPER Jorge Campos was handed a substitute appearance – as a forward! – for the last 25 minutes of the national team's goalless draw with Iceland in San Francisco in November.

The 37-year-old, who was in three World Cup squads, had not played for Mexico since winning his 123rd cap in a 2002 World Cup qualifying defeat by Honduras two and a half years ago.

But Campos was given a last hurrah in honour of his contribution to Mexican soccer. He asked to play up front because he had always wanted to score for his country, but was unable to break the deadlock.

At home, Campos' former club Pumas UNAM, Pachuca and Tigres were the only three to have shown any consistency during the league stage of the closing championship as they qualified for the knockout stages.

They were joined by Atlante, Santos Laguna and Necaxa as the other automatic qualifiers, while Toluca overcame Guadalajara and Cruz Azul beat Tecos UAG in play-offs to take the last two quarter-final places.

Carlos Ramirez

Out of my way...Campos takes on Iceland

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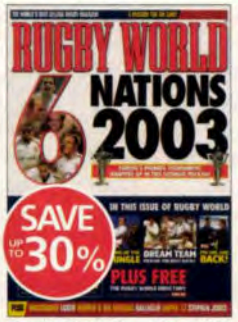

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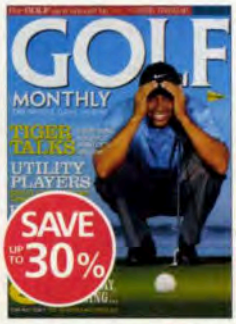

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Thais labour into finals

ASIAN CUP

THERE WERE FEW surprises as the line-up for next July's Asian Cup finals in China was completed. Uzbekistan, Thailand, Qatar, Jordan, Iran, Turkmenistan and the United Arab Emirates took the remaining places in Asia's premier international tournament, which will feature 16 teams for the first time.

Thailand, under new coach Carlos Roberto Carvalho, took the most laboured route, losing their first three games against Hong Kong, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan before rallying on home soil to qualify in second place in Group A. The Tiger Cup holders sealed their place with a 4-1 victory over the group-winning Uzbeks on the final day.

In Group B, former Japan coach Philippe Troussier guided Qatar through with a 2-0 win over Singapore. That gave the Frenchman's team second place behind runaway group winners Kuwait.

Such was the domination of Jordan and Iran in Group D that both nations qualified with games to spare. Iran's home match against North Korea was abandoned after the Koreans walked off the pitch at Tehran's Azadi stadium, claiming they had been hit by missiles thrown from the crowd. Iran were leading 1-0 at the time but the Asian confederation was expected to award the game to Korea.

The UAE, beaten finalists in 1996, emerged from Group G under the guidance of Englishman Roy Hodgson. Turkmenistan were the other qualifiers from the group, after a 1-1 draw with Syria in Damascus.

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Indonesia, South Korea, Oman, Iraq and Bahrain all reached the finals earlier in the year, while hosts China and defending champions Japan qualify automatically.

Michael Church

Singapore sling...Tan Kim Leng is sandwiched by Qatar's Ali Al-Mari and Saud Ghanem

JAPAN

Marinos' ship comes in

YOKOHAMA F MARINOS won the 2003 League championship outright by adding the Second Stage title to their First Stage victory. They emulated Jubilo Iwata's feat last season and thus made the usual play-off for the overall crown unnecessary for the second year running.

Marinos' victory rounded off a remarkable first season in charge for Japan's 1998 World Cup coach Takeshi Okada, but the most astonishing part was the ending, when the Second Stage title effectively changed hands twice in time added on.

With all the final-day games played at the same time, morning leaders Jubilo appeared on course to triumph after holding third-placed Marinos to a 1-1 draw as the game went into injury-time. But a few seconds later, Tatsuhiko Kubo put Marinos 2-1 ahead, apparently handing the title to Kashima Antlers, then 2-1 up at Urawa Reds. Antlers' glory lasted only two minutes. As the final whistle blew in Yokohama and the scoreboard switched to live scenes from Saitama stadium, the looks on the Antlers faces told it all. Emerson had equalised for Reds, and Marinos had won the lot outright.

"I dreamed at the start of the season of winning the title against Jubilo in the last game," said Okada, "and it actually happened. Everyone fought for the team, right to the end, and that is very pleasing for a manager."

But the day could barely have started worse for Marinos. Gral scored for Jubilo after two minutes, and Marinos keeper Tetsuya Enomoto was sent off 13 minutes later. A second-half equaliser from Marquinhos put Marinos back in the hunt before Kubo's late heroics.

The finish was appropriate for the tightest race ever. Ten of the 16 top-flight teams remained in contention with two games left, and Marinos' haul of 26 points will probably survive as the record for the lowest winning total.

Antlers were also denied glory in the Yamazaki Nabisco Cup Final, thrashed 4-0 by Urawa Reds, who took revenge for a 1-0 defeat by their rivals in last year's Final. However, it was little consolation to Reds manager Hans Ooft, who announced he was quitting at the end of the season, furious at having apparently learned second-hand that the club were planning to sack him.

Kyoto Purple Sanga and Vegalta Sendai were relegated, and will be replaced by Albirex Niigata and Sanfrecce Hiroshima.

Mike Plastow & Michi Ishijima

CHINA

Shenhua hang on

SHANGHAI SHENHUA won the League for the first time since 1995 and despite losing 4-1 on the last day of the season. Wu Jingyui's side pipped cross-town rivals Inter Shanghai by a point, with defending champions Dalian Shide a further point back in one of China's closest title races.

Shenhua crashed to their last-day defeat at the hands of Shenzhen, with China striker Li Yi hitting a hat-trick. But they held on because Inter lost 2-1 to Tianjin, while Dalian had completed their fixtures.

Dalian, champions for the past three seasons, may now part company with coach Milorad Kosanovic.

The top flight, now to be known as the Chinese Super League, will be cut by three teams to 12 next season. The bottom three – Chongqing Lifan, Bayi and Shaanxi Guoli – all drop out, and there are no promoted sides.

Qingdao managed to book the final place in the Super League. However, their preparations for the run-in were thrown into disarray when South Korean coach Lee Jang-soo quit after suspecting several of his players were involved in a betting scandal.

Michael Church

Feeling champion...Marinos

ROUND-UP

- Chonbuk Motors lifted the SOUTH KOREAN Cup, beating Chunnam Dragons on penalties in the Final after a 2-2 draw.

- NEPAL and GUAM have both withdrawn from the 2006 World Cup qualifying campaign. They had been due to meet each other to decide who would go into the draw for Asia's main qualifying competition.

- Frenchman Rolland Courbis became the first casualty of the new UNITED ARAB EMIRATES season following Al Wahda's defeat by promoted Emarat in a President's Cup group match.

- German coach Wolfgang Sidka has taken charge of QATAR'S Al Arabi following a two-year stint in Bahrain.

- Muktijoddah KC completed the Double in BANGLADESH when a golden goal by Knachan brought them a 2-1 victory over Mohammedan SC in the Federation Cup Final.

- Zob-Ahan retained top spot in the IRANIAN League after 10 rounds with a 2-0 win over Pegah.

- VIETNAM'S Olympic team captain Phan Nhu Thanh has been banned for five years for his alleged involvement in match-fixing. Two other players, Nguyen Viet Thang and Luong Trung Tuan, were given three-year bans.

- Salgaocar won INDIA'S Durand Cup Final on penalties after a 1-1 draw with East Bengal. Keeper Rajat Ghosh Dastidar was the hero, making some superb saves during regulation time then blocking two spot-kicks in the shoot-out. East Bengal also lost on penalties in the Super Cup showdown, defeated by Mahindra United after another 1-1 draw.

- Parramatta Power, pre-season favourites to win the AUSTRALIAN championship, are frustrating their fans with extraordinarily erratic form. The expensively-assembled Sydney side went to the top of the table for the first time by thrashing champions Perth Glory 6-0, the Western Australian team's first defeat by more than three goals. However, the new leaders then lost 3-1 to struggling Wollongong Wolves. The latter, last season's wooden spoonists, then created a further shock by downing Glory 2-1. However, the Perth side remained top having retaken the lead following a 4-1 win at Adelaide United the previous week.

Oh yes...Ante Milicic celebrates scoring for Parramatta in their 6-0 rout of Perth

- In FIJI, the Olympic selection's tilt at the national League title ended in tears after their team, weakened by suspensions, lost to Ba 1-0. Nine players had been banned indefinitely following a drunken brawl outside the FA Academy on the eve of the game. Ba's victory secured them the title for the third successive year.

- AS Magenta created a new milestone in the renaissance of NEW CALEDONIAN soccer by defeating Tahiti's Pirae to capture the French Pacific Overseas Territories Cup. Tahitian clubs had won the Cup every year since its inception in 1996, and Pirae looked set to extend this record when leading the first leg 2-0 after 77 minutes. However, Magenta snatched two late goals and then dominated the return in another 2-2 draw before prevailing 4-3 in a penalty shoot-out. The victory also put Magenta in the French Overseas Territories Cup Final, in which they will face Martinique's Franciscain in Paris next May.

- Mark Edwards hit a hat-trick as Lepea beat Moataa 5-2 in SAMOA'S Champion of Champions Grand Final.

Michael Church, Paul Moon, Azam Mahmood & G C Das

New reign for Raja

CAF CUP

RAJA CASABLANCA lost out in a brutal war against Zamalek in the 2002 African Champions League Final, but the Moroccan club gained some consolation by winning the last edition of the Confederation of African Football (CAF) Cup.

The three-times Champions Cup winners, coached by Frenchman Henri Michel, beat Cotonsport of Cameroon 2-0 on aggregate. Both goals came in the first leg in Casablanca through Mustapha Bidouane and Senegalese import Mohamed Ali Diallo either side of half-time.

Raja's triumph was all the more impressive since they achieved it without top scorer Hicham Aboucherouane. He played only a bit part in the first leg and was absent for the second while finalising a move to Qatar. Cameroon international Francois Enden Elokan also missed the Final after being dropped by the club for indiscipline.

The victory was particularly welcome to Michel, who has coached the national teams of Cameroon, Morocco and Tunisia in almost 10 years' service to African football but with little to show for it in terms of silverware.

Next year, the CAF Cup will be combined with the African Cup-winners Cup in a new tournament to be called the African Confederations Cup, although FIFA apparently want the name changed because it clashes with its own biennial tournament for continental champion nations.

Mark Gleeson

It's ours...Raja players and officials celebrate the CAF Cup victory

ROUND-UP

CENTRAL AFRICA

- Former Oldham and Huddersfield manager Mick Wadsworth has been appointed to lead DR CONGO at the African Nations Cup finals in Tunisia. In the League, AS Vita Club were crowned champions for the first time since 1997. Motema Pembe won the Cup, beating TP Mazembe Engelbert 2-0 in the Final.

- Cotonsport are the new champions of CAMEROON, finishing nine points clear of Canon Yaounde.

- In GABON, US Bitam are under investigation for alleged match-fixing after beating JS Libreville 10-0 on the final day to clinch the title on goal difference from FC 105 Libreville. The club are suspected of bribing JSL keeper Brice Mondambo.

EAST AFRICA

- Odon Razafintsalalama has been appointed MADAGASCAR'S fourth coach of the season. He takes over from Auguste Raux, who was in charge for just one match.

- Akbar Patel is to quit as MAURITIUS coach following their elimination from the World Cup.

- The COMOROS ISLANDS will become the 53rd member of the Confederation of African Football at its congress in Tunis in January.

Reprieve...Christian Chukwu

NORTH AFRICA

- EGYPT'S Al Ahly have fired Portuguese coach Toni after just seven games in charge, the final straw being a 4-0 defeat by compatriot rivals Ismaili in the Arab Champions League. Fathi Mabrouk has taken over as caretaker.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

- SOUTH AFRICA forward Shaun Bartlett has quit international football to concentrate on his club career with Charlton in England. He scored 27 goals in 61 appearances for his country.

- AS Aviacao won the ANGOLAN League for the second year running. InterClube beat Sagrada Esperanca in the Cup Final thanks to an extra-time goal from Pathy Essenge.

- Viktor Bondarenko has quit as coach of MOZAMBIQUE after the country's elimination by Guinea in the World Cup qualifiers.

- Werner Bickelhaupt has been appointed coach of SWAZILAND following the two-match reign of Zambian Francis Banda.

- Edington Ng'onamo has been named caretaker coach of MALAWI after the departure of Alan Gillett.

WEST AFRICA

- Christian Chukwu will remain as coach of NIGERIA after plans to hire former England captain Bryan Robson fell through. Lobi Stars won the FA Cup with a 2-0 win over Port Harcourt Sharks.

- Former GHANA Under-20 coach Emmanuel Afranie has been fired by Accra Great Olympics after a run of poor results.

- ASEC Abidjan won the title in IVORY COAST for the fourth year running, finishing two points ahead of arch-rivals Africa Sports.

Mark Gleeson

TALENT SCOUT

TOMORROW'S STARS TODAY

Isaac BOAKYE

Ghanaian youngster aiming to fill Yeboah's Bundesliga boots

IT MAY BE that the German Bundesliga is just desperate for new and colourful heroes, but 22-year-old Isaac Boakye has already been tagged as 'the new Yeboah' and is feeling the pressure to fill some large boots.

Two sports magazines have heralded Arminia Bielefeld's Ghanaian signing in the same fashion, asking questions about his ability to emulate the goalscoring feats of compatriot Tony Yeboah.

Even the former Hamburg and Leeds striker, who is Boakye's agent and manager, admits his prodigy is still some way off the finished article. "I can tell you Boakye will be one of the best strikers in the Bundesliga in the next two or three years, but whether he is my successor, we will have to wait and see," says Yeboah.

Boakye has made it in Germany at the second attempt after Kurt Jara rejected him last year when Yeboah took him for trials at Hamburg.

After that, Boakye went back to Ghana to play for Asante Kotoko before returning to Germany and signing for relegated Bielefeld for £60,000 this summer. The imposing forward was quick to show his potential, scoring twice in his first four games as Bielefeld found their place among the front-runners for promotion back to the top flight.

Boakye, who had made his name with another Ghanaian side, Goldfields, was also an instant hit at international level. He made his senior team debut at the age of 19, scoring the last-minute winner in an African Nations Cup qualifier away to Zimbabwe.

That victory sealed Ghana's place at the finals in Mali, where the youngster reprised his late, late show with two goals in the last two minutes against Burkina Faso to give his side a 2-1 win and take them through to the quarter-finals.

With six sisters to support in his home town of Kumasi, Boakye is eager to prolong his relatively lucrative time in Germany. He says: "I am thrilled to get to play in Europe. Now I must prove myself."

Mark Gleeson

Going for goal...Boakye is determined to make the most of his time in German football

FACT FILE

- **Club** Arminia Bielefeld (Ger)
- **Country** Ghana
- **Born** November 26, 1981, in Kumasi
- **Previous clubs** Goldfields, Asante Kotoko
- **International debut** June 2001, v Zimbabwe
- **International caps** 15 (4 goals)

MANCINI & Daniele DE ROSSI

Explosive introduction...Mancini

Euro star in waiting...De Rossi

Dynamic duo sparking the Roma revival

PREVIEWING THE SERIE A season, I suggested Roma could yet prove themselves as good a side as the one that took the 2001 title. That opinion, expressed with reservations, was based on the obvious quality of coach Fabio Capello, the outstanding form of playmaker Francesco Totti and the possibility that strikers such as Antonio Cassano and Vincenzo Montella might rediscover their best form.

One aspect of this season's Roma revival not bargained for, however, was the emergence of spectacular new talent. Not many could have predicted the explosion on to the scene of Roma's new 23-year-old Brazilian Alessandro Faiolhe Amantino, better known as Mancini. Nor would every critic have been certain that 20-year-old Daniele De Rossi would so effectively build on the promise of four Serie A outings last season. By mid-November, he had not only become a first-team regular but was also being talked about as a likely member of Italy's Euro 2004 squad next summer.

De Rossi's obvious talent and impact in scoring two goals in his handful of games last term meant his emergence was not a total surprise. By contrast, Mancini's convincing performances as a carbon-copy replacement for the peerless Cafu, now at Milan, have been simply flabbergasting. All the more so since, in six months at Serie B Venezia last season, he sank without trace in 13 anonymous outings.

After being bought by Roma from Brazilian club Atletico Mineiro last January, Mancini had been 'parked' at Venezia with a view to recalling him after he had gained a little extra experience.

Capped by Brazil at Under-23 level and also called into the full squad for two friendlies against Argentina in 1999, Mancini was hardly a nobody when he arrived in Italian football. But he had suffered a dip in form and wandered from club to club for two years before being reborn in last year's Brazilian championship. He scored 15 goals in 36 games for Atletico Mineiro, securing the move to Italy.

After a miserable time at Venezia, he was looked on more in hope than expectation by Roma fans this summer. Many of them were surprised, too, when he featured in Capello's line-up for the opening Serie A match away to Udinese. But after a sparkling debut, the scepticism vanished.

Blessed with Brazilian touch and control, not to mention real pace down the right, Mancini had already made a huge contribution to the Roma cause before he consecrated his position with a spectacular back-heeled opening goal in the 2-0 win over Lazio in the season's first Rome derby.

Overnight, a new Roma fan icon was born. Within days, more than 2,000 T-shirts bearing an image capturing the magic moment of his goal had been sold. "I'm the happiest lad in the world," Mancini chortled next day. "I only really began to believe what I had done when I saw it on TV at home last night."

If Roma do lift a title this season, it is almost certain that De Rossi will have had a hand in

FACT FILE

MANCINI
Club Roma (Ita)
Country Brazil
Born August 1, 1980, in Belo Horizonte
Previous clubs Atletico Mineiro, Portuguesa, Sao Caetano, Atletico Mineiro, Venezia (Ita)

Daniele DE ROSSI
Club Roma
Country Italy
Born July 24, 1983, in Rome

the business, too. Born in the Rome coastal suburb of Ostia and brought up in the Roma youth team under the skilful handling of 1982 World Cup winner Bruno Conti, his combative qualities and self-assurance were obvious from his bright start.

Such has been the midfielder's sustained progress this season that he has not only earned his place in the first-team squad but also become captain of Italy's Under-21 side under Claudio Gentile, another 1982 World Cup winner.

Gentile says: "Any coach at any club would like to have De Rossi. He's the sort of player who knows what he's going to do even before the ball gets to him. He plays with the maturity of a 30-year-old and inspires confidence in all those around him."

Given that Gentile's side have qualified for next summer's European Under-21 Championship finals, De Rossi may yet get the chance to convince an international audience of his talent. He may yet even find himself playing in back-to-back European finals since senior team coach Giovanni Trapattoni has already indicated he will call up De Rossi for some of the pre-Euro 2004 friendlies.

All of which leaves De Rossi just a little bemused and much flattered. He says: "Until very recently, if someone had said to me that I would be playing at the Euro 2004 finals for Italy, I would have said: 'Yeah, on my Playstation, sure.' Mind you, for the time being, the only European championships I'm thinking of are the Under-21 finals."

Not surprisingly, though, he and his agent are currently renegotiating his contract with Roma, which is expected to be extended to 2008 and involve a 10-fold annual salary rise from his current modest £60,000.

The future for De Rossi is unquestionably bright, according to Conti. "When you see him play, you'd say he's been at it all his life and yet he's still only a 20-year-old," he says. "He's got terrific personality, he's got everything to become one of the greats of the next decade of Italian football."

Conti could easily have also been speaking about Mancini. For Roma, a bright start to the season is looking even brighter given the long-term implications of having two such burgeoning young talents in the side.

Paddy Agnew

Carlos BONET

Tireless midfielder at the heart of Paraguay's push to Germany 2006

WITH FOUR ROUNDS gone, Paraguay top South America's World Cup qualification table – even though former captain and talisman Jose Luis Chilavert thinks there are too many old players in the side.

Maybe the secret is a blend of strong lungs and old heads, and nowhere is that more true than on the right flank.

Francisco Arce, one of the best crossers in the game, is as important as ever to the team. But the veteran right-back is not as mobile as he was, which means that midfielder Carlos Bonet has a vital role to play.

The 26-year-old has to charge up and down the entire length of the touchline, dropping back to give Arce a hand with the marking and getting as far forward as possible to occupy opposing defenders and create space for Arce to curl in a cross.

It is a function carried out with typical Paraguayan unselfishness. "Just being part of the squad is a huge source of pride," says Bonet. "I see myself as a battler who for years has been making a huge effort to overcome the obstacles."

Bonet has risen to the top of South American football from the obscurity of Argentina's Second Division with Atletico Rafaela. Libertad brought him back to Paraguay, won their first title since 1976, and Bonet's hunched-shouldered dynamism caught the eye of Cesare Maldini, in his brief spell as national coach. "I had hoped for a good season with my club, but the idea of being called up for the World Cup never crossed my mind," says Bonet. "It was a dream come true."

And it keeps getting better. Bonet played one World Cup game, the second-round tie against Germany. Now, he has not only won another League title, but he has also established himself in Paraguay's starting line-up.

Bonet is unlikely to figure in any gallery of greats. He should score far more goals, for example. But he has no great interest in seeing his name in lights. Instead, he embodies the collective spirit that allows Paraguay to do so well despite their limited resources.

Others may run out of steam during the World Cup qualifiers, but Bonet will be doing his best to run all the way to Germany.

Tim Vickery

FACT FILE

Club Libertad
Country Paraguay
Born October 2, 1977, in Asuncion
Previous clubs Sol de America, Atletico Rafaela (Arg)
International debut March 2002, v Nigeria
International caps 17 (0 goals)
Honours Paraguayan League 2002, 2003

Julien ESCUDE

French defender learning from Koeman and Krol in Amsterdam

ADVANTAGE ESCUDE. After the Davis Cup-winning exploits of his tennis professional brother Nicolas, Julien Escude has every chance of some success of his own now he has joined Ajax from unfashionable Breton club Rennes. The former French Under-21 defender needed little persuasion to sign for £2.7million in the summer on a four-year contract. Frustrated by Rennes' perennial relegation battles, he had long yearned for a move to more ambitious surroundings.

Last year, Manchester United sniffed at an asking price of £5.1m and just to make sure no deal was done, Escude was sidelined by a freak accident, tripping and straining knee ligaments while taking his dog for a walk! Certainly not the best in show.

A year on United were still keen, as were a number of Italian and Spanish sides. Yet Escude went Dutch, snapped up by Ajax to replace skipper and Romanian libero Cristian Chivu, who had left for Roma.

"I know I've made the right choice," says the 24-year-old. "I'm at a big European club which plays precise, attacking football and has an incredibly talented squad. I have the chance to play in the Champions League. The Dutch League is of a good standard too. There may be only three big teams here but everyone tries to play decent football. You don't see much kick and rush."

The first Frenchman to wear Ajax colours, Escude has had to adjust to a relatively new position in central defence. At Rennes, he was mostly used at left-back, but Ajax coach Ronald Koeman is convinced his composure, technical ability and bite in the tackle are better employed in the centre. Escude can only hope the switch proves as good for him as it was for Chivu, who also started out as a left-back.

"I've tried to ease myself in gently but I feel I'm bound to progress here," says Escude. "Ronald Koeman and his assistant Ruud Krol were world-class defenders and their advice will be precious."

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

- **Club** Ajax (Hol)
- **Country** France
- **Born** August 17, 1979, in Chartres
- **Previous clubs** Cannes, Rennes

Andreas ISAKSSON

Swedish keeper back on top after failed Italian job

STILL ONLY 22, Andreas Isaksson has already crammed much into his short time in the game. A move to one of the world's biggest clubs while only a teenager, rejection, a couple of Swedish League winners' medals and a place in the national team – Djurgardens' keeper is no novice.

Isaksson's career got off to a whirlwind start. He was just 17 when given his first-team debut with Trelleborgs and was soon making a name for himself with his precocious talent.

Comparisons were made with such all-time great Swedish goalkeepers as Ronnie Hellstrom and Thomas Ravelli. Juventus were so impressed that they promptly paid £850,000 for him in June 1999, signing him to a five-year contract, even though he had completed a mere 11 League games.

But in Turin, the bell would toll on the youngster's hitherto charmed life. Behind Dutch No 1 Edwin Van der Sar and faithful old Juve retainer Michelangelo Rampulla in the keeping hierarchy, Isaksson could not even force his way on to the bench. After 18 months in the shadows, he asked his agent, former Sweden full-back Roger Ljung, to negotiate a return to his homeland.

In spite of Trelleborgs' protest that they had first option, Isaksson agreed to join Stockholm club Djurgardens early in 2001 and it has proved to be a mutually beneficial relationship.

'Isak' was outstanding as his new club finished runners-up to Hammarby in the League and proved equally hard to beat in subsequent seasons, starring in Djurgardens' back-to-back titles in 2002 and 2003.

"We have the best keeper in Sweden," says Djurgardens co-coach Soren Akerby. "He gained a lot from being with the world-class talent at Juventus."

Isaksson has prospered with the national team, too, more than doing himself justice as they topped their Euro 2004 qualifying pool.

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

- **Club** Djurgardens
- **Country** Sweden
- **Born** October 3, 1981, in Smygehamn
- **Previous clubs** Ostra Torp GIF, Trelleborgs, Juventus (Ita)
- **International debut** March 2002, v Switzerland
- **International caps** 15
- **Honours** Swedish League 2002, 2003; Swedish Cup 2002

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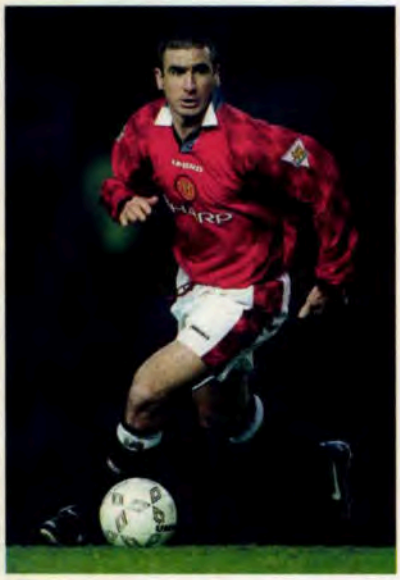

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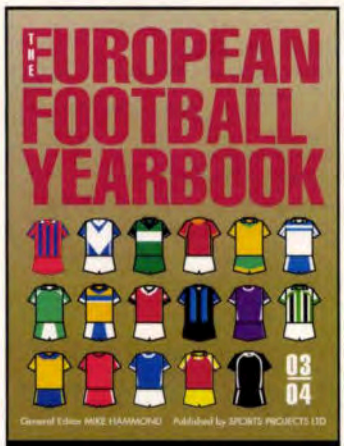

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WORLD CUP DRAW

Man in the middle...Italian referee Pierluigi Collina helps conduct the draw

Destination Germany

The race is on for places at World Cup 2006

THE DRAW FOR the qualifying rounds of the 2006 World Cup took almost two hours to complete in Frankfurt. But the path to Germany is now mapped out for all the potential finalists.

With Germany already qualified as hosts, 31 places are up for grabs. Twenty-nine teams will qualify automatically from their regional sections. Four countries – one from Asia, Oceania, CONCACAF and South America – will go into play-offs for the final two places.

The main changes from 2002 are that the holders, Brazil, must qualify for the first time (the South American qualifying section started in September); and Europe has lost half a finals place to CONCACAF. The latter's president, Jack Warner, was vociferous in his support of Sepp Blatter's presidential re-election in 2002.

Africa's top-seeded teams will all come up against difficult opposition in their bid to become one of five qualifiers from the region.

Senegal, quarter-finalists in Korea/Japan last year, have the easiest task, facing Mali, Zambia, Togo, Liberia and Congo in Group 1.

South Africa must meet DR Congo and Ghana in Group 2, while Cameroon will be tested by Egypt and Ivory Coast in Group 3. Nigeria's opponents include Zimbabwe and Algeria in Group 4, while Tunisia must play fellow north Africans Morocco in Group 5.

In the European section, 51 nations will compete for the right to join Germany in the finals. Kazakhstan, formerly a member of the Asian confederation, will be competing in the European qualifying campaign for the first time. The Kazakhs have been drawn in arguably the toughest pool, Group 2, alongside Greece, Turkey, Denmark, Ukraine, Georgia and Albania.

Denmark coach Morten Olsen was not a happy man. "It's a terrible group for us," he complained. "All the opponents are practically from the same region and on top of that we have to travel to Kazakhstan in Asia, which is an incredibly difficult journey."

Greece and Turkey were not the only local rivals to be drawn together. Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia & Montenegro, both formerly part of Yugoslavia, will meet in Group 7, where the favourites to qualify automatically will be Spain, ahead of Belgium.

But the most eagerly awaited of the local rivalries will be in Group 6, where England will meet 'home nations' Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as old foes Poland, plus Austria and Azerbaijan. "It's local derbies, more or less," said coach Sven Goran Eriksson.

The Group 1 teaming of Holland and the Czech Republic means they will be meeting for the third campaign in a row. The two faced each other in the Euro 2004 qualifiers and have been grouped together again in the finals of that competition, next summer.

Russia and Portugal, two other teams in the same Euro 2004 finals group, have been drawn together again. They will meet in Group 3, along with Slovakia, Latvia, Estonia, Luxembourg and Liechtenstein.

Of the Europe's top nations, France can be quietly pleased with their draw. The 1998 world champions have been drawn with Switzerland, Republic of Ireland, Israel, Cyprus and the Faroe Islands in Group 4. A relieved coach Jacques Santini said: "I consider Switzerland to be our toughest opponents. More than anything else I wanted to avoid Holland and Russia – and the football gods heard my prayer."

But Santini will need no reminding that France missed out on the 1990 World Cup after being held to a draw by Cyprus.

Another coach who was happy with the draw was Italy's Giovanni Trapattoni. After being pooled with Slovenia, Scotland, Norway, Moldova and Belarus in Group 5, he said: "It's a good group for Italy. There are two huge matches for us – one in Oslo [versus Norway] and one in Glasgow [versus Scotland]. They will be decisive."

Bulgaria, Sweden and Croatia will be in a three-way battle to win Group 8, which also contains Iceland, Hungary and Malta.

In the Asian and CONCACAF sections, all the big guns have been handed relatively easy passages to the second stages. One draw of note is in Group 4 of the Asian section, where China must play Hong Kong, which is still affiliated independently to FIFA.

● Tickets to watch matches at the 2006 World Cup in Germany will be available from £20, less than the average price of an English Premiership match.

The prices, which range from £20 for the cheapest group match ticket to £400 for the most expensive Final ticket, were approved at a FIFA executive meeting held the day before the qualifying draw.

WORLD CUP 2006 THE QUALIFYING DRAW

AFRICA

5 FINALS BERTHS

GROUP 1
Senegal
Mali
Zambia
Togo
Liberia
Congo

GROUP 2
South Africa
DR Congo
Burkina Faso
Ghana
Uganda
Cape Verde Islands

GROUP 3
Cameroon
Egypt
Ivory Coast
Libya
Sudan
Benin

GROUP 4
Nigeria
Zimbabwe
Algeria
Angola
Gabon
Rwanda

GROUP 5
Tunisia
Morocco
Kenya
Guinea
Malawi
Botswana

The five group winners qualify for the finals

MATCHDAY DATES
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June 18-20, 2004
July 2-4, 2004
September 3-5, 2004
October 8-10, 2004
March 25-27, 2005
June 3-5, 2005
June 17-19, 2005
September 2-4, 2005
October 7-9, 2005

ASIA

4.5 FINALS BERTHS

1ST STAGE

GROUP 1
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Qatar
Jordan
Laos

GROUP 2
Uzbekistan
Iraq
Palestine
Taiwan

GROUP 3
Japan
Oman
India
Singapore

GROUP 4
China
Kuwait
Malaysia
Hong Kong

GROUP 5
United Arab Emirates
Thailand
Yemen
North Korea

GROUP 6
Bahrain
Syria
Kyrgyzstan
Tajikistan

GROUP 7
South Korea
Lebanon
Vietnam
Maldives

GROUP 8
Saudi Arabia
Indonesia
Turkmenistan
Sri Lanka

The eight group winners advance to 2nd stage

2ND STAGE
The eight qualifiers are divided into two groups of four. The winners and runners-up of these groups qualify for the finals. The two third-placed sides meet in a two-leg play-off, the winner of which meets the fourth-placed CONCACAF team in a play-off for a place in the finals

MATCHDAY DATES
1ST STAGE
February 18, 2004
March 31, 2004
June 9, 2004
September 4, 2004
October 9, 2004
November 17, 2004

2ND STAGE
February 9, 2005
March 26, 2005
March 31, 2005
June 4, 2005
June 11, 2005
August 17, 2005

ASIAN PLAY-OFF
September 3 & October 8, 2005

CONCACAF

3.5 FINALS BERTHS

1ST STAGE

GROUP 1
Game 1: Grenada v Guyana
Game 2: United States v Winners Game 1

GROUP 2
Game 1: Bermuda v Montserrat
Game 2: El Salvador v Winners Game 1

GROUP 3
Game 1: Haiti v Turks & Caicos Islands
Game 2: Winners Game 1 v Jamaica

GROUP 4
Game 1: British Virgin Islands v St Lucia
Game 2: Panama v Winners Game 1

GROUP 5
Game 1: Cayman Islands v Cuba
Game 2: Winners Game 1 v Costa Rica

GROUP 6
Game 1: Aruba v Surinam
Game 2: Winners Game 1 v Guatemala

GROUP 7
Game 1: Antigua & Barbuda v Dutch Antilles
Game 2: Winners Game 1 v Honduras

GROUP 8
Canada v Belize

GROUP 9
Game 1: Dominica v Bahamas
Game 2: Mexico v Winners Game 1

GROUP 10
Game 1: US Virgin Islands v St Kitts & Nevis
Game 2: Barbados v Winners Game 1

GROUP 11
Game 1: Dominican Republic v Anguilla
Game 2: Winners Game 1 v Trinidad & Tobago

GROUP 12
Nicaragua v St Vincent & Grenadines

Ties to be played on a two-leg, home-and-away basis

The 12 group winners advance to 2nd stage

2ND STAGE

GROUP 1
Winners of 1st stage groups 1, 2, 3, 4

GROUP 2
Winners of 1st stage groups 5, 6, 7, 8

GROUP 3
Winners of 1st stage groups 9, 10, 11, 12

The top two from each group advance to 3rd stage

3RD STAGE
The six qualifiers play in a single group, the top three from which qualify for the finals. The fourth-placed team meet the winners of the Asian play-off in a play-off for a finals place

MATCHDAY DATES
1ST STAGE*
Game 1s: February 18 & March 31, 2004
Game 2s: June 12/13 & June 19/20, 2004
**Groups containing only two teams will play on the Game 2 dates*

2ND STAGE
August 18, 2004
September 4/5, 2004
September 8, 2004
October 9/10, 2004
October 13, 2004
November 17, 2004

3RD STAGE
February 9, 2005
March 26/27, 2005
March 30, 2005
June 4/5, 2005
June 8, 2005
August 17, 2005
September 3/4, 2005
September 7, 2005
October 8/9, 2005
October 12, 2005

EUROPE

14 finals berths (including hosts Germany, who qualify automatically)

GROUP 1
Czech Republic
Holland
Romania
Finland
Macedonia
Armenia
Andorra

GROUP 2
Turkey
Denmark
Greece
Ukraine
Georgia
Albania
Kazakhstan

GROUP 3
Portugal
Russia
Slovakia
Latvia
Estonia
Liechtenstein
Luxembourg

GROUP 4
France
Republic of Ireland
Switzerland
Israel
Cyprus
Faroe Islands

GROUP 5
Italy
Slovenia
Scotland
Norway
Belarus
Moldova

GROUP 6
England
Poland
Austria
Wales
Northern Ireland
Azerbaijan

GROUP 7
Spain
Belgium
Serbia & Montenegro
Bosnia-Herzegovina
Lithuania
San Marino

GROUP 8
Sweden
Croatia
Bulgaria
Iceland
Hungary
Malta

The eight group winners and two best runners-up* qualify for the finals. The other six runners-up are paired in three two-leg play-off matches, the winners of which also qualify for the finals

**Group runners-up will be ranked according to their results against the teams finishing 1st, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th in their respective groups*

MATCHDAY DATES
September 4, 2004 (qualifiers start)
October 12, 2005 (qualifiers end)

PLAY-OFFS
November 12 & 16, 2005

OCEANIA

0.5 FINALS BERTHS

1ST STAGE

GROUP 1
Tahiti
Solomon Islands
New Caledonia
Tonga
Cook Islands

GROUP 2
Fiji
Vanuatu
Papua New Guinea
Samoa
American Samoa

The top two from each group advance to 2nd stage

Byes to 2nd stage: Australia & New Zealand

2ND STAGE
The six qualifiers play in a single group. The group winners and runners-up advance to 3rd stage

3RD STAGE
The two qualifiers meet in a two-leg play-off, the winners of which meet the fifth-placed South American team in a play-off for a place in the finals

MATCHDAY DATES
1ST STAGE
March/April 2004

2ND STAGE
May/June 2004

3RD STAGE
September 2005

NOTES
- All groups are to be played on a league system, except CONCACAF 1st stage.
- See pages 85-87 for details of South America's qualifying section and African and Asian preliminaries.

INTERNATIONALS

Sunday, November 9

Nov 9 - friendly
Mozambique 2
Swaziland 0

Tuesday, November 11

Nov 11 - friendly
Equatorial Guinea 3
Sao Tome e Principe 1

Nov 11 - Kampala - friendly
Uganda 2 (Lubega, Sali)
Tanzania 1 (Matoli)

Wednesday, November 12

Nov 12 - Warsaw - friendly
Poland 3 (J Bak 6, Klos 18, Krzynowek 85)
Italy 1 (Cassano 19)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 9,000. **Ref:** Ovrebo (Nor)
Poland: Dudek - Klos, J Bak (Hajto 72), Zielinski, Michal Zewlakow (Rzasa 77), Kosowski (Gorawski 90), M Lewandowski, Kukielka, Krzynowek, Rasiak (Saganowski 87), Niedzielan (Zurawski 80).
Italy: Toldo - Panucci (Grosso 55), Cannavaro (Materazzi 46; Ferrari 89), Nesta, Pancaro (Oddo 46), Perrotta, Zanetti, Marchionni (Gattuso 55), Cassano (Bazzani 83), Di Vaio (Miccoli 62), Vieri.

Saturday, November 15

Nov 15 - Tirana - friendly
Albania 2 (Aliaj 26, Bushi 81)
Estonia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Douros (Gre)
Albania: Strakosha (Billa 46) - E Beqiri, Cipi, Cana, Hasi, Shkembi (Rraklli 46), Aliaj (Pisha 84), Haxhi, Mancaku (Bushi 46), Tare (Skela 46), K Duro (Muka 70).
Estonia: Poom - Jaager, Stepanov, Piiroja, Saviauk, Reim, Viikmae, Kristal, Zelinski (Reinumae 62), M Rooba (Klavan 71), Terehhov (Lindpere 71). *Sent off: Piiroja 57min.*

Nov 15 - Teplice - friendly
Czech Republic 5 (Jankulovski pen 26, Heinz 49, Poborsky 55, Sionko 63, Skacel 82)
Canada 1 (Radzinski 89)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 8,343. **Ref:** Sundell (Swe)
Czech Republic: Blazek - Tyce, Ujfalusi, Jankulovski, Bolf (Johana 46), Poborsky (Sionko 57), Nedved (Jarosik 46), Galasek (Vorisek 68), Vachousek, Koller (Skacel 73), Stajner (Heinz 46).
Canada: Hirschfeld - Bernier, Hastings, Dasovic (Fenwick 75), De Vos (Rogers 63), McKenna, Stalteri, Imhof, Radzinski, Peschisolido (Nash 72), Jazic.

Nov 15 - Cairo - friendly
Egypt 2 (Abdelhadi 73, Hossam 90)
South Africa 1 (B McCarthy 50)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Salim (Lby)
Egypt: N El-Sayed (A El-Sayed) - A Hassan, Al-Tabei, El-Quabbani (El-Saqqa), Abdelhadi, T El-Sayed, Abdelhafiz, Abdelhamid, T Said (H Said), Emam (Belal), Hossam.
South Africa: Baron - Lekgetho, Mabizela, Mkhonza, Molefe, Sibaya, Moshoeu (T Mokoena), Buckley (Pule), Zuma, B McCarthy (Nomvete), Mayo.

Nov 15 - Gelsenkirchen - friendly
Germany 0
France 3 (Henry 21, Trezeguet 55, 81)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 53,574. **Ref:** Farina (Ita)
Germany: Kahn - Friedrich, Worns, Nowotny (Rehmer 76), Hinkel, Jeremies, Baumann (Ernst 71), Ballack, Schneider (Freier 67), Bobic (Klose 67), Kuranyi.
France: Coupet - Sagnol (Gallas 61), Thuram, Silvestre, Lizarazu, Makelele, Pires (Wiltord 73), Dacourt, Zidane, Trezeguet (Govou 82), Henry.

Nov 15 - Meknes - friendly
Morocco 1 (Ouaddou 24)
Burkina Faso 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 25,000

Nov 15 - Aveiro - friendly
Portugal 1 (Pauleta 60)
Greece 1 (Lakis 47)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Esquinas Torres (Spa)
Portugal: Ricardo - Miguel, Jorge Andrade (Caneira 76), Fernando Couto (Beto 69), Rui Jorge (Rogerio Matias 72), Costinha, Rui Costa, Deco, Figo, Pauleta, Boa Morte (Simao 46).
Greece: Nikopolidis - Seitaridis (Georgiadis 76), Kapsis (Dabizas 86), Dellas, Fissas, Zagorakis (Katsouranis 70), Karagounis, Tsartas (Venetidis 46), Giannakopoulos (Lakis 46), Haristeas (Papadopoulos 73), Nikolaidis (Basinas 46). *Sent off: Karagounis 30min.*

Nov 15 - Dakar - friendly
Senegal 1 (Diouf 89)
Ivory Coast 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 50,000

Sunday, November 16

Nov 16 - Manchester - friendly
England 2 (Rooney 5, J Cole 9)
Denmark 3 (Martin Jorgensen 8, pen 30, Tomasson 82)
HT: 2-2. **Att:** 64,159. **Ref:** Hrinak (Slk)
England: James (Robinson 46) - G Neville (Johnson 16), Terry, Upson, Ashley Cole (Bridge 46), Beckham (Jenas 66), Butt (P Neville 46), Lampard, J Cole (Murphy 76), Rooney (Parker 66), Heskey (Beattie 46).
Denmark: Sorensen - Helveg (Priske 46), Henriksen, Per Nielsen (Gaardsoe 71), N Jensen, Wieghorst (D Jensen 29), Gravesen, Gronkjaer (Lovenkrands 61), Martin Jorgensen (Madsen 84), Rommedahl (Perez 19), Sand (Tomasson 46).

Nov 16 - Houston, USA - friendly
Honduras 1 (Alvarez 87)
Finland 2 (Tainio 60, Hakanpaa 68)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 26,000. **Ref:** Hall (USA)
Honduras: Coello - Alvarez, Vallecillo, S Caballero, Javier Martinez, Sabillon, Jose Pineda, Mena, Costa, Gonzalez, Ferreira.
Finland: Moilanen - Hietanen, Pasoja, Kuivasto, Heikkinen (Nylund 86), Kopteff, Okkonen (Hakanpaa 46), Tainio (Koppinen 76), Nurmela (J Niemi 80), Eremenko (Lagerblom 74), Roiha (Kottila 68).

Nov 16 - Ancona - friendly
Italy 1 (Di Vaio 58)
Romania 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 11,700. **Ref:** Stark (Ger)
Italy: Toldo (Abbiati 46) - Oddo (Pancaro 86), Cannavaro (Castellini 55), Ferrari, Panucci (Marchionni 55), Zambrotta, Perrotta, Tommasi (Ambrosini 46), Totti (Pirlo 71), Cassano (Di Vaio 46), Bazzani (S Inzaghi 55).
Romania: Lobont - Stoican (Plesan 73), Iencsi, Radoi, Rat (Rada 72), Dumitru (Dica 64), Pancu (Marica 82), D Munteanu (Miu 64), Mitea (Cristea 89), Bratu (Raducanu 46), Mutu.

Nov 16 - Kingston - friendly
Jamaica 3 (Fuller 6, Lisbie 72, Burton 85)
El Salvador 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Ramdhan (T&T)
Jamaica: Ricketts (A Lawrence 46) - Goodison, C Davis, Gardner, F Davis (Neil 70), J Lawrence (Langley 65), Hyde, Whitmore (Crawford 74), J Johnson (Hue 60), Fuller (Burton 65), Lisbie (Taylor 74).
El Salvador: S Rivera - Arteaga, Medina (Penate 84), Argueta, Orellana, Ramirez, S Gonzalez (Garcia 90), Mendoza (Penado 78), Lopez (Leiva 53), Nerio (Deras 88), Campos (Portillo 69).

Nov 16 - Plock - friendly
Poland 4 (Niedzielan 27, Rasiak 30, Kosowski 73, Zurawski 82)
Serbia & Montenegro 3 (Boskovic 70, Vukic 79, Iliev 89)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 9,000. **Ref:** Weiner (Ger)
Poland: Dudek (Szamotulski 46) - Baszczynski, Klos, Hajto, Rzasa, Kosowski (Gorawski 84), M Lewandowski, Kukielka (Bieniuk 87), Krzynowek, Rasiak (Saganowski 46; Surma 88), Niedzielan (Zurawski 46).
Serbia & Montenegro: Zilic - N Djordjevic (Malbasa 70), Krstajic, M Dudic, Ocokoljic (S Markovic 56), Mladenovic (Vukic 69), Sarac (Duljaj 86), D Stankovic (N Brnovic 86), Ilic (Boskovic 51), D Kovacevic (Pantelic 84), Milosevic (Iliev 58).

Tuesday, November 18

Nov 18 - Cairo - friendly
Egypt 1 (Belal 10)
Sweden 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Abdallah (Lby)
Egypt: N El-Sayed (A El-Sayed 46) - Abdelhafiz (Emam 73), Al-Tabei, El-Saqqa, Abdelhadi, T El-Sayed (A Hassan 81), Barakat, Abdelhamid, H Said (T Said 46), Belal (Ali 46), Hossam.
Sweden: Hedman - Ostlund, Mellberg (Von Schleebrugge 58), Michael Svensson, Edman, Linderoth, Wilhelmsson, A Svensson, P Farnerud (Anders Andersson 37), M Jonson (Allback 46), Selakovic (A Johansson 79).

Nov 18 - Dublin - friendly
Rep Ireland 3 (Duff 24, Robbie Keane 60, 84)
Canada 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 23,000. **Ref:** Whitby (Wal)
Rep Ireland: Given (Colgan 83) - Carr (Harte 46), Cunningham, Dunne, O'Shea (Thompson 86), S Reid (Delap 62), Kavanagh (Holland 10), A Reid (McPhail 73), Duff (Kilbane 86), Robbie Keane, Doherty (Morrison 46).
Canada: Hirschfeld - Stalteri, De Vos (Rogers 82), McKenna, Jazic, Bent, Bircham (Nash 79), Imhof, Hastings (Fenwick 86), Radzinski, Peschisolido (Bernier 74).

Nov 18 - Seoul - friendly
South Korea 0
Bulgaria 1 (Manchev 19)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 38,257. **Ref:** Mohd Salleh (Mly)
South Korea: Lee Woon-jae - Yoo Sang-chul, Park Jae-hong, Lee Sang-hun, Lee Eul-yong, Song Chong-gug, Lee Young-pyo, Kim Nam-il (Lee Chun-soo 58), Park Ji-sung, Ahn Jung-hwan (Cha Doo-ri 75), Kim Do-hoon (Choi Yong-soo 55).
Bulgaria: Zdravkov (Ivankov 57) - Krastev (Zhelev 70), Topuzakov, Kirilov, Pazin (I Petkov 63), Dimitrov (Gargorov 65), Peev, Hristov, Jankovic (Yanchev 65), Manchev (Kamburov 72), Lazarov (Yankov 90).

Wednesday, November 19

Nov 19 - Alajuela - friendly
Costa Rica 2 (Marin 16, Saborio 74)
Finland 1 (Nurmela pen 61)
HT: 1-0
Costa Rica: Mesen - Wright, G Martinez, Marin, Bennett, Esquivel (C Castro), M Solis, Lopez (D Fonseca), A Solis (Saborio), Gomez, Wanchope (Scott).
Finland: Kaven - Heikkinen (Heitanen 46), Nylund, Pasoja (Roiha 64), Kuivasto, Hakanpaa (Koppinen 46), Nurmela, Tainio, J Niemi (Kottila 81), Eremenko (Lagerblom 74), Kopteff. *Sent off: Nurmela 76min.*

Nov 19 - Budapest - friendly
Hungary 0
Estonia 1 (M Rooba 86)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 1,200. **Ref:** Sedivy (Cze)
Hungary: Kiraly (Vegh 46) - Korolovszky, Dragoner, Z Peto, Simek (Pest 67), Lipcsei (Miriuta 46), Lisztes (Nemeth 62), Lendvai (Farkas 46), Bodor (Hercegfalvi 85), Szabics, Gera (Kovacs 44).
Estonia: Poom - Allas, Stepanov, Piiroja, Klavan, Reim, Viikmae (Haavistu 76), Kristal, Zelinski, Oper (M Rooba 64), Lindpere (Terehhov 76).

Nov 19 - Oita - friendly
Japan 0
Cameroon 0
Att: 38,627. **Ref:** Lu (Chn)
Japan: Narazaki - Yamada, Miyamoto, Tsuboi, Alex, Ono, H Nakata, Inamoto, Fujita (Endo 80), Yanagisawa (Okubo 69), Takahara.
Cameroon: Kameni (Kwekeu 46) - Mettomo, Njanka (Falemi 25), Atouba, Tchato (Bahoken 64), Perrier Doumbe, Geremi, Mokake (Epalle 46), Djemba Djemba (Webo 68), Mboma (Ngom Kome 80), Makoun.

Nov 19 - San Francisco, USA - friendly
Mexico 0
Iceland 0
Att: 17,000. **Ref:** Saheli (USA)
Mexico: O Sanchez - Osorio, Oteo, M Perez, Carmona, Lopez, R Garcia (Juan P Rodriguez 65), Valdez (R Morales 46), Arce (L Perez 46), Bautista (J Campos 65), Mora (Bravo 64).
Iceland: Arason - Thorsteinsson, O O Bjarnason, K O Sigurdsson, A Helgason, Einarsson, Stigsson (Kolvidsson 85), V Gunnarsson (Skulason 85), H Jonsson, H Sigurdsson (Takefusa 86), Dadason.

Nov 19 - Casablanca - friendly
Morocco 0
Mali 1 (David Coulibaly 35)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 6,000
Sent off: Mahamadou Sidibe (Mali) 47min

Nov 19 - Leiria - friendly
Portugal 8 (Pauleta 10, 20, 45, 52, Figo 33, Nuno Gomes 69, 75, 87)
Kuwait 0
HT: 4-0. **Att:** 22,000. **Ref:** Ingvarsson (Swe)
Portugal: Quim - Miguel, Fernando Couto (Beto 46), Jorge Andrade, Rui Jorge, Costinha, Rui Costa (Caneira 46), Deco (Rogerio Matias 63), Figo (Boa Morte 46), Pauleta (Nuno Gomes 66), Simao.
Kuwait: Kankune - Y Abdullah, Abdulrahman (Al-Ataiqi 46), A Asel, Al-Enzi, Al-Tayyar, M Al-Mutairi (Al-Namash 46), Jumah (Al-Fadli 76), Abdulaziz (Al-Otaibi 74), Saihan (Zayed 46), Al-Mutwa.

Nov 19 - Port-of-Spain - friendly
Trinidad & Tobago 2 (Seaton 12, Harquez og 23)
Cuba 1 (Galindo 47)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 8,000

Nov 19 - Tunis - friendly
Tunisia 2 (Braham 43, Hagui 87)
South Africa 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 12,000. **Ref:** Diatta (Sen)
Tunisia: Boumnijel - Hagui, Clayton (Ayari 46), Badra (Zaalani 78), Saidi, Mnari, Bouazizi (Zitouni 80), Seghayer, Chedli, Braham (Mhadhebi 79), Jaziri (Jedidi 73).
South Africa: Arendse - Mohlala, Coyle, A Mokoena (Molapo 61), Mabizela, Sibaya (Sapula 44), Zuma (G Mazibuko 80), T Mokoena, B McCarthy, Buckley (C Mazibuko 52), Nhleko (Nomvete 63). *Sent off: Molapo 76min, Coyle 81min.*

Thursday, November 20

Nov 20 - Hesperange - friendly
Luxembourg 1 (Schauls 77)
Moldova 2 (Golban 19, Dadu 90)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 623
Luxembourg: Besic - Peters, Federspiel (Hellenbrand 64), Hoffmann, Schauls, Remy, Di Domenico (Mannon 64), Leweck (Thimesch), Braun, Cardoni, Christophe (Huss 79).
Moldova: Matiughin - Covalenco (Calincov 61), Testemitanu (Andriuta 90), Olexici, Barisev (Bursuc 61), Priganiuc, Covaliciuc, Ivanov, Golban (Radcenco 79), Cebotari, Dadu.

Tuesday, December 2

Dec 2 - Kuwait City - friendly
Kuwait 3 (B Abdullah pen 23, 33, Ali 63)
Iran 1 (Daei 77)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Al-Qahtani (Qat)
Kuwait: Kankooni - Al-Shemmeri (M Abdullah 34), Bekhait (Al-Namash 46), Abdulredha, Al-Murtah, Abdulkudous, Ali, Al-Shamali, Nedda, Al-Muttawa (Nahar 70), B Abdullah.
Iran: Mirzapour - Taghipour, Amirabadi (Kavianpour 46), Kameli-Mofrad, Vahedinikbakht, Nosrati, Navidkia (Vaziri 60), Nekoonam, Kazemian, Karimi, Daei.

WORLD CUP 2006 QUALIFIERS

AFRICA

Preliminary round, 1st leg

*Nov 16 - Accra**
Somalia 0
Ghana 5 (Duah 25, 56, Boakye 69, 89, Gyan 82)
HT: 0-1
**Tie played in Ghana because of security problems in Somalia*

Preliminary round, 2nd legs

Nov 14 - Algiers
Algeria 6 (Cherrad 16, 22, Boutabout 42, 70, Mamouni 45, Akrour 82)
Niger 0
HT: 4-0. **Ref:** El-Arjoun (Mor)
Algeria 7-0 on agg
Algeria: Mezair - Raho, Haddou, Aribi, Zafour, Kraouche (Ghazi 75), Mamouni (Hadjadj 67), Boutabout, Cherrad (Akrour 63), Achiou, Mansouri.
Niger: Aboudou - El-Hassan, Aniset, Eragae Ismali, Issoufou, Doudou, Issaka (Idrissa 63), Mohamed (Boubakeur 68), Meyei, Al-Kaidji, Ibrahim.

Nov 14 - Bamoko
Mali 2 (S Coulibaly 15, D Sidibe pen 82)
Guinea-Bissau 0
HT: 1-0
Mali 4-1 on agg

Nov 14 - Nouakchott
Mauritania 2 (Langlet 3, Sidibe 10)
Zimbabwe 1 (Mbwando 81)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 3,000
Zimbabwe 4-2 on agg

Nov 15 - Libreville
Gabon 4 (Nzingou 2, Twite og 17, Nguema 37, 80)
Burundi 1 (Longo 90)
HT: 3-0
Gabon 4-1 on agg

Nov 15 - Nairobi
Kenya 3 (Oliech 10, 32, Okoth 30)
Tanzania 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 30,000
Kenya 3-0 on agg
Kenya: Onyiso - Kassim (Nyaboro), Shaaban, Waweru, Otieno, Juma, Muiruri (Sunguti), Mambo, Mulama (Owino), Oliech, Okoth.
Tanzania: Kaseja - Mexime, Issa, Bawasa, Mayari, Suleiman, Kassim, Mwakinye, Gabriel, Morris, Kaniki.

Nov 15 - Lilongwe
Malawi 0
Ethiopia 0
Att: 35,000
Malawi 3-1 on agg
Malawi: Nyasulu - Chipatala, Mponda, Mabedi, Kamanga, Kamwendo, Kondowe, Maduka (Ng'ambi 35), Mgangira, Mwafulirwa (Gondwe 65), V Phiri (Chirwa).
Ethiopia: Getachew - Siraj, Bekele, Woideyohans, Habiamu, Debebe, Teshome, Asseta, Mensuin, Nigussie, Balay.

Nov 15 - Windhoek
Namibia 1 (Shipanga 41)
Rwanda 1 (Lomani 39)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 5,000
Rwanda 4-1 on agg
Namibia: Tjiuoro - Hummel, Ouseb, R Gariseb, Risser (Shipanga 31), Mannetti (Ndjavera 72), Benjamin, Hindjou, Tjikuzu, Biwa (Geingob 56), Diergaardt.
Rwanda: Mosi - Ntagumana, Ndikumana, Mana, Bizagwira, Nshimiyimana, Mukoko (Habyarimana 57), Elias (Mulisa 73), Karekezi (Gatete 83), Mbonabucya, Lomani.

Nov 15 - Freetown
Sierra Leone 1 (Koroma pen)
Congo 1 (Guie-Mien)
Congo 2-1 on agg

Nov 15 - Lusaka
Zambia 1 (Milanzi 5)
Seychelles 1 (Suezetta 30)
HT: 1-1
Zambia 5-1 on agg

Nov 16 - Luanda
Angola 2 (Akwa 32, Bruno Mauro 61)
Chad 0
HT: 1-0
Agg 3-3. Angola on away goals

Nov 16 - Cotonou
Benin 3 (Tchomogo pen 33, 62, pen 90)
Madagascar 2 (Radonamahafalison 16, Andriantaina 23)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 20,000
Benin 4-3 on agg

Nov 16 - Praia
Cape Verde Islands 3 (Cafu 31, 65, Calo pen 89)
Swaziland 0
HT: 1-0
Cape Verde Islands 4-1 on agg

Nov 16 - Asmara
Eritrea 0
Sudan 0
Sudan 3-0 on agg

Nov 16 - Maseru
Lesotho 0
Botswana 0
Botswana 4-1 on agg

Nov 16 - Monrovia
Liberia 3 (Roberts 10, Tondo 75, 85)
Gambia 0
HT: 1-0
Liberia 3-2 on agg

Nov 16 - Benghazi
Libya 8 (Al-Masli 15, 20, 25, Al-Taeb 45, 60, Al-Ramly 54, Saad 75, Al-Kakly 85)
Sao Tome e Principe 0
HT: 4-0
Libya 9-0 on agg

Nov 16 - Curepipe
Mauritius 3 (Naboth 36, Mourgine 61, Louis 89)
Uganda 1 (Obua 112 - golden goal)
Aet. **HT:** 1-0. **90mins:** 3-0
Uganda 4-3 on agg
Uganda: Mugisha - Obwiny, Tabula, Tenywa, Sekajja, Kaweesa (Mawejje), Kabeta (Lubega), Bajope, Sali (Kabanda), Watson, Obua.

Nov 16 - Maputo
Mozambique 3 (Dario 71, 77, 87)
Guinea 4 (Youla 17, Bangoura 25, 35, 60)
HT: 0-3
Guinea 5-3 on agg

Nov 16 - Lome
Togo 2 (Adebayor 45, Salifou 57)
Equatorial Guinea 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 12,000
Togo 2-1 on agg

Nov 19 - Kumasi
Ghana 2 (Appiah 27, Adjei 89)
Somalia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 20,000
Sent off: Bortey (Ghana) 59min
Ghana 7-0 on agg

AT A GLANCE

10.10.03 .....Guinea-Bissau-Mali.....1-2
14.11.03 .....Mali-Guinea-Bissau.....2-0
.....*Mali 4-1 on agg*
11.10.03 .....Botswana-Lesotho 4-1
16.11.03 .....Lesotho-Botswana 0-0
.....*Botswana 4-1 on agg*
11.10.03 .....Equatorial Guinea-Togo.....1-0
16.11.03 .....Togo-Equatorial Guinea.....2-0
.....*Togo 2-1 on agg*
11.10.03 .....Madagascar-Benin.....1-1
16.11.03 .....Benin-Madagascar.....3-2
.....*Benin 4-3 on agg*
11.10.03 .....Niger-Algeria.....0-1
14.11.03 .....Algeria-Niger.....6-0
.....*Algeria 7-0 on agg*
11.10.03 .....Sao Tome e Principe-Libya 0-1
16.11.03 .....Libya-Sao Tome e Principe 8-0
.....*Libya 9-0 on agg*
11.10.03 .....Seychelles-Zambia.....0-4
15.11.03 .....Zambia-Seychelles.....1-1
.....*Zambia 5-1 on agg*
11.10.03 .....Tanzania-Kenya 0-0
15.11.03 .....Kenya-Tanzania 3-0
.....*Kenya 3-0 on agg*
11.10.03 .....Uganda-Mauritius 3-0
16.11.03 .....Mauritius-Uganda 3-1
.....*Uganda 4-3 on agg*
12.10.03 .....Burundi-Gabon 0-0
15.11.03 .....Gabon-Burundi 4-1
.....*Gabon 4-1 on agg*
12.10.03 .....Chad-Angola.....3-1
16.11.03 .....Angola-Chad.....2-0
.....*Agg 3-3. Angola on away goals*
12.10.03 .....Congo-Sierra Leone 1-0
15.11.03 .....Sierra Leone-Congo 1-1
.....*Congo 2-1 on agg*
12.10.03 .....Ethiopia-Malawi 1-3
15.11.03 .....Malawi-Ethiopia 0-0
.....*Malawi 3-1 on agg*
12.10.03 .....Gambia-Liberia.....2-0
16.11.03 .....Liberia-Gambia.....3-0
.....*Liberia 3-2 on agg*
12.10.03 .....Guinea-Mozambique 1-0
16.11.03 .....Mozambique-Guinea 3-4
.....*Guinea 5-3 on agg*
12.10.03 .....Rwanda-Namibia 3-0
15.11.03 .....Namibia-Rwanda 1-1
.....*Rwanda 4-1 on agg*
12.10.03 .....Sudan-Eritrea.....3-0
16.11.03 .....Eritrea-Sudan.....0-0
.....*Sudan 3-0 on agg*
12.10.03 .....Swaziland-Cape Verde Islands.....1-1
16.11.03 .....Cape Verde Islands-Swaziland.....3-0
.....*Cape Verde Islands 4-1 on agg*
12.10.03 .....Zimbabwe-Mauritania.....3-0
14.11.03 .....Mauritania-Zimbabwe.....2-1
.....*Zimbabwe 4-2 on agg*
16.11.03 .....Somalia-Ghana* 0-5
19.11.03 .....Ghana-Somalia.....2-0
.....*Ghana 7-0 on agg*
**Played in Ghana*

Winners progress to qualifying groups. See page 84 for qualifying draw

Burkina Faso v Central African Republic – Central African Republic withdrew; Burkina Faso walkover

Byes: Cameroon, DR Congo, Egypt, Ivory Coast, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tunisia

ASIA

Pre-qualifying round, 1st legs

Nov 19 - Ashgabat
Turkmenistan 11 (Ovekov 6, 35, Kuliyev 8, 22, 81, Bairamov 27, Berdeyev 42, Agabayev 48, 63, 66, Agayev 90)
Afghanistan 0
HT: 6-0. **Att:** 10,000
Sent off: Sahdal (Afghanistan)

Nov 23 - Taipei
Taiwan 3 (Chuang Yao-tsung 30, Chen Yui-te 50, Chang Wu-yeh 75)
Macao 0
HT: 1-0

Nov 26 - Dhaka
Bangladesh 0
Tajikistan 2 (Khamidov 11, Khakimov 50)
HT: 0-1

Nov 29 - Vientaine
Laos 0
Sri Lanka 0

Nov 29 - Ulaan Baatar
Mongolia 0
Maldives 1 (Nizan 24)
HT: 0-1

Nov 29 - Karachi
Pakistan 0
Kyrgyzstan 2 (Boldygin 35, Chikishev 59)
HT: 0-1

Pre-qualifying round, 2nd legs

Nov 22 - Kabul
Afghanistan 0
Turkmenistan 2 (Kuliyev 85, 90)
HT: 0-0
Turkmenistan 13-0 on agg

Nov 29 - Macao
Macao 1 (Ian Chi-pang 87)
Taiwan 3 (Chen Yui-te 14, 69, Chiang Shiu-lu 66)
HT: 0-1
Taiwan 6-1 on agg

Nov 30 - Dushanbe
Tajikistan 2 (Kholmatov 17, Rabiyev 83)
Bangladesh 0
HT: 1-0
Tajikistan 4-0 on agg

Dec 3 - Bishkek
Kyrgyzstan 4 (Chikishev 15, Chertkov pen 28, Boldygin 67, Krasnov 90)
Pakistan 0
HT: 2-0
Kyrgyzstan 6-0 on agg

Dec 3 - Male
Maldives 12 (Ashfaq 3, 60, 63, 67, Nizam pen 41, Oppo 45, 45, Asad 65, Thoriq 74, 78, Mongolia og 75, Nazeeh 79)
Mongolia 0
HT: 4-0
Maldives 13-0 on agg

Dec 3 - Colombo
Sri Lanka 3 (Channa 37, Jayasuriya 54, Mohamed 90)
Laos 0
HT: 1-0
Sri Lanka 3-0 on agg;
Laos also qualify as best losers

AT A GLANCE

19.11.03 .....Turkmenistan-Afghanistan.....11-0
22.11.03 .....Afghanistan-Turkmenistan.....0-2
.....*Turkmenistan 13-0 on agg*
23.11.03 .....Taiwan-Macao 3-0
29.11.03 .....Macao-Taiwan 1-3
.....*Taiwan 6-1 on agg*
26.11.03 .....Bangladesh-Tajikistan 0-2
30.11.03 .....Tajikistan-Bangladesh 2-0
.....*Tajikistan 4-0 on agg*
29.11.03 .....Laos-Sri Lanka 0-0
03.12.03 .....Sri Lanka Laos.....3-0
.....*Sri Lanka 3-0 on agg;*
Laos also qualify as best losers
29.11.03 .....Mongolia-Maldives.....0-1
03.12.03 .....Maldives-Mongolia.....12-0
.....*Maldives 13-0 on agg*
29.11.03 .....Pakistan-Kyrgyzstan 0-2
03.12.03 .....Kyrgyzstan-Pakistan 4-0
.....*Kyrgyzstan 6-0 on agg*

Winners and best losers qualify for the main Asian qualifying tournament . See page 84 for qualifying draw

Guam v Nepal – Nepal withdrew; Guam walkover. However, Guam then also withdrew, necessitating the introduction of a 'best loser' berth in the main qualifying tournament

Automatic entrants to main qualifying tournament: Bahrain, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, North Korea, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, Syria, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Yemen

SOUTH AMERICA

Nov 15 - Buenos Aires
Argentina 3 (D'Alessandro 56, Crespo 61, Aimar 63)
Bolivia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 30,042. **Ref:** Hidalgo (Per)
Argentina: Cavallero - Quiroga, Ayala, Samuel, Zanetti, Almeyda (Cambiasso 89), Kily Gonzalez, Aimar, D'Alessandro (Sorin 84), Crespo (Saviola 80), C Delgado.
Bolivia: L Fernandez - Raldes, O Sanchez, Paz Garcia, Ricaldi, Gatty Ribeiro, Justiniano, Reyes, Roger Suarez (Etcheverry 69), Mercado (J A Castillo 64), Botero (Mendez 64).

Nov 15 - Barranquilla
Colombia 0
Venezuela 1 (Arango 8)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Chandia (Chl)
Colombia: Mondragon - Vallejo, Perea, Yepes, Viveros, Lozano, Bolano (Arriaga 54), Hernandez (Patino 46), Grisales, Becerra, Angel.
Venezuela: Angelucci - Vallenilla, Hernandez, Rey, Cichero, Jimenez, M Mea Vitali (Vielma 6), Paez (H Gonzalez 57), Urdaneta (Rojas 57), Arango, Noriega.

Nov 15 - Asuncion
Paraguay 2 (Santa Cruz 30, Cardozo 70)
Ecuador 1 (Mendez 59)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Paniagua (Bol)
Paraguay: Villar - Arce, J C Caceres, Gamarra, Caniza, Bonet (Gavilan 72), Ortiz, Paredes, Campos (Cuevas 61), Santa Cruz, Cardozo (Alvarenga 87).
Ecuador: Cevallos - De la Cruz, I Hurtado, G Espinoza, Corozo, Mendez, E Tenorio (Fernandez 83), Ambrossi (Salas 77), Gomez, Chala, Ordonez.

Nov 15 - Montevideo
Uruguay 2 (Chevanton 31, Romero 48)
Chile 1 (Melendez 20)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 60,000. **Ref:** Martin (Arg)
Uruguay: Munua - Gonzalez, Lopez, Lago, Munoz (Romero 46), Sosa, Nunez, Liguera (Recoba 70), Chevanton, Bueno, Forlan (Hornos 46).
Chile: N Tapia - R Rojas, Olarra, Miguel Ramirez, R Perez, Martel (Ormazabal 53), Munoz, Melendez, Mark Gonzalez (Mirosevic 53), Navia (Norambuena 75), Pinilla.

Nov 16 - Lima
Peru 1 (Solano 58)
Brazil 1 (Rivaldo pen 20)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 70,000. **Ref:** Ruiz (Col)
Peru: Ibanez - Jorge Soto, Galliquio, Rebosio, Hidalgo (Salas 52), Jayo, Ciurlizza, Solano, Palacios (Garcia 74), Mendoza, Pizarro.
Brazil: Dida - Cafu, Lucio, Roque Junior, Junior, Gilberto Silva, Ze Roberto, Emerson Ferreira (Renato 61), Kaka (Alex 74), Rivaldo (Luis Fabiano 84), Ronaldo.

Nov 18 - Santiago
Chile 0
Paraguay 1 (Paredes 30)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 63,000. **Ref:** Mendez (Uru)
Chile: N Tapia - Contreras, Miguel Ramirez, Olarra, Alvarez (Ormazabal 46), Marcos Gonzalez (Melendez 46), R Perez, Mirosevic, Pizarro, Pinilla, Navia (Norambuena 62).
Paraguay: Villar - Arce, J C Caceres, Gamarra, Caniza, Bonet (Gavilan 79), A Ortiz, Paredes (Da Silva 88), Enciso, Santa Cruz, Cardozo (Alvarenga 87).

Nov 18 - Maracaibo
Venezuela 2 (Rey 90, Arango 90)
Bolivia 1 (Botero 60)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Reinoso (Ecu)
Venezuela: Angelucci - Vallenilla, Cichero, Rey, Hernandez (Rojas 61), Jimenez, Arango, Urdaneta, Paez, Moran (Rondon 59), Noriega (Moreno 52).
Bolivia: L Fernandez - Raldes (Sandy 79), O Sanchez, Paz Garcia, Reyes, Alvarez, Gatty Ribeiro, Justiniano, Roger Suarez (Mendez 69), Mercado (Vaca 66), Botero.

Nov 19 - Curitiba
Brazil 3 (Kaka 19, Ronaldo 29, 87)
Uruguay 3 (Forlan 57, 76, Gilberto Silva og 79)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Elizondo (Arg)
Brazil: Dida - Cafu, Lucio, Roque Junior, Junior, Renato (Juninho Pernambucano 79), Gilberto Silva, Ze Roberto, Kaka (Alex 72), Rivaldo (Luis Fabiano 80), Ronaldo.
Uruguay: Munua - Romero (Recoba 46), Bizera, Lopez, Lago, Sosa, Abeijon (Nunez 36), Liguera, Hornos (Chevanton 55), Zalayeta, Forlan.

Nov 19 - Barranquilla
Colombia 1 (Angel 47)
Argentina 1 (Crespo 26)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Simon (Bra)
Colombia: O Cordoba - G Martinez, I Cordoba, Yepes, Viveros, Grisales, Viafara, Lozano (Bolano 20), Patino (Arriaga 46), Montoya (Becerra 71), Angel.
Argentina: Cavallero - Quiroga, Ayala, Samuel, Zanetti, Almeyda, Placente, Kily Gonzalez, Aimar (D'Alessandro 70), C Delgado (Veron 46), Crespo (Saviola 71).

Nov 19 - Quito
Ecuador 0
Peru 0
Att: 43,000. **Ref:** Gonzalez (Par)
Ecuador: Cevallos - De la Cruz, I Hurtado, Reasco, G Espinoza, M Ayovi, Obregon (Fernandez 66), Chala (A Aguinaga 79), Mendez, C Tenorio, Ordonez (Salas 46).
Peru: Ibanez - Jorge Soto, Rebosio, Galliquio, Salas, Jayo, Ciurlizza, Garcia, Palacios (Moran 53), Mendoza (Farfan 46), Pizarro.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Paraguay	4	3	0	1	8	6	9
Argentina	4	2	2	0	9	3	8
Brazil	4	2	2	0	7	5	8
Uruguay	4	2	1	1	11	8	7
Venezuela	4	2	0	2	3	6	6
Peru	4	1	2	1	6	4	5
Ecuador	4	1	1	2	3	3	4
Chile	4	1	1	2	5	6	4
Bolivia	4	1	0	3	5	10	3
Colombia	4	0	1	3	2	8	1

Top four in section qualify automatically for the finals; fifth-placed side enter a qualifying play-off

06.09.03 .....Argentina-Chile 2-2
06.09.03 .....Ecuador-Venezuela 2-0
06.09.03 .....Peru-Paraguay 4-1
07.09.03 .....Colombia-Brazil 1-2
07.09.03 .....Uruguay-Bolivia 5-0
09.09.03 .....Chile-Peru 2-1
09.09.03 .....Venezuela-Argentina 0-3
10.09.03 .....Bolivia-Colombia 4-0
10.09.03 .....Brazil-Ecuador 1-0
10.09.03 .....Paraguay-Uruguay 4-1
15.11.03 .....Argentina-Bolivia 3-0
15.11.03 .....Colombia-Venezuela 0-1
15.11.03 .....Paraguay-Ecuador 2-1
15.11.03 .....Uruguay-Chile 2-1
16.11.03 .....Peru-Brazil 1-1
18.11.03 .....Chile-Paraguay 0-1
18.11.03 .....Venezuela-Bolivia 2-1
19.11.03 .....Brazil-Uruguay 3-3
19.11.03 .....Colombia-Argentina 1-1
19.11.03 .....Ecuador-Peru 0-0
30/31.03.04 .....Argentina-Ecuador
30/31.03.04 .....Bolivia-Chile
30/31.03.04 .....Paraguay-Brazil
30/31.03.04 .....Peru-Colombia
30/31.03.04 .....Uruguay-Venezuela
01/02.06.04 .....Bolivia-Paraguay
01/02.06.04 .....Brazil-Argentina
01/02.06.04 .....Ecuador-Colombia
01/02.06.04 .....Uruguay-Peru
01/02.06.04 .....Venezuela-Chile
04/05.06.04 .....Argentina-Paraguay
04/05.06.04 .....Chile-Brazil
04/05.06.04 .....Colombia-Uruguay
04/05.06.04 .....Ecuador-Bolivia
04/05.06.04 .....Peru-Venezuela
04/05.09.04 .....Brazil-Bolivia
04/05.09.04 .....Chile-Colombia
04/05.09.04 .....Paraguay-Venezuela
04/05.09.04 .....Peru-Argentina
04/05.09.04 .....Uruguay-Ecuador
09/10.10.04 .....Argentina-Uruguay
09/10.10.04 .....Bolivia-Peru
09/10.10.04 .....Colombia-Paraguay
09/10.10.04 .....Ecuador-Chile
09/10.10.04 .....Venezuela-Brazil
12/13.10.04 .....Bolivia-Uruguay
12/13.10.04 .....Brazil-Colombia
12/13.10.04 .....Chile-Argentina
12/13.10.04 .....Paraguay-Peru
12/13.10.04 .....Venezuela-Ecuador
16/17.11.04 .....Argentina-Venezuela
16/17.11.04 .....Colombia-Bolivia
16/17.11.04 .....Ecuador-Brazil
16/17.11.04 .....Peru-Chile
16/17.11.04 .....Uruguay-Paraguay
26/27.03.05 .....Bolivia-Argentina
26/27.03.05 .....Brazil-Peru
26/27.03.05 .....Chile-Uruguay
26/27.03.05 .....Ecuador-Paraguay
26/27.03.05 .....Venezuela-Colombia
29/30.03.05 .....Argentina-Colombia
29/30.03.05 .....Bolivia-Venezuela
29/30.03.05 .....Paraguay-Chile
29/30.03.05 .....Peru-Ecuador
29/30.03.05 .....Uruguay-Brazil
04/05.06.05 .....Brazil-Paraguay
04/05.06.05 .....Chile-Bolivia
04/05.06.05 .....Colombia-Peru
04/05.06.05 .....Ecuador-Argentina
04/05.06.05 .....Venezuela-Uruguay
07/08.06.05 .....Argentina-Brazil
07/08.06.05 .....Chile-Venezuela
07/08.06.05 .....Colombia-Ecuador
07/08.06.05 .....Paraguay-Bolivia
07/08.06.05 .....Peru-Uruguay
03/04.09.05 .....Bolivia-Ecuador
03/04.09.05 .....Brazil-Chile
03/04.09.05 .....Paraguay-Argentina
03/04.09.05 .....Uruguay-Colombia
03/04.09.05 .....Venezuela-Peru
08/09.10.05 .....Argentina-Peru
08/09.10.05 .....Bolivia-Brazil
08/09.10.05 .....Colombia-Chile
08/09.10.05 .....Ecuador-Uruguay
08/09.10.05 .....Venezuela-Paraguay
11/12.10.05 .....Brazil-Venezuela
11/12.10.05 .....Chile-Ecuador
11/12.10.05 .....Paraguay-Colombia
11/12.10.05 .....Peru-Bolivia
11/12.10.05 .....Uruguay-Argentina

EURO 2004 QUALIFIERS

Play-offs, 1st legs

Nov 15 - Zagreb
Croatia 1 (Prso 5)
Slovenia 1 (Siljak 22)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Merk (Ger)
Croatia: Pletikosa - D Simic, Neretljak, Tomas, Tudor, Zivkovic (Srna 59), Mornar, J Leko (Rosso 46), N Kovac, Prso, Olic (Rapajic 46).
Slovenia: Dabanovic - Cipot, Karic, Vugdalic, Knavs, Sukalo, N Ceh (Bulajic 86), Zahovic, Pavlin, Acimovic (Kapic 76), Siljak (Cesar 89).

Nov 15 - Riga
Latvia 1 (Verpakovskis 29)
Turkey 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 8,000. **Ref:** Veissiere (Fra)
Latvia: Kolinko - Isakovs, Lobanovs, Stepanovs, Astafjevs, Korablovs, Laizans, Bleidelis, Rubins (Pucinsks 83), Rimkus (Stolcers 86), Verpakovskis (Kolesnicenko 89).
Turkey: Rustu - Fatih Akyel, Bulent, Ibrahim Uzulmez, Emre Asik, Tugay, Ergun, Emre Belozoglu (Tumer 86), Okan Buruk (Gokdeniz 84), Nihat (Deniz 77), Ilhan. *Sent off: Emre Asik 73min.*

Nov 15 - Moscow
Russia 0
Wales 0
Att: 29,000. **Ref:** Cortez Batista (Por)
Russia: Ovchinnikov - Evseev, Ignashevich, Onopko, Sennikov, Smertin (Gusev 59), Mostovoi, Alenichev, Loskov, Sychev (Izmailov 46), Bulykin.
Wales: P Jones - Delaney, Melville, Gabbidon, Barnard, Koumas, Savage, Johnson, Speed, Giggs, Hartson (Blake 83).

Nov 15 - Glasgow
Scotland 1 (McFadden 22)
Holland 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 50,670. **Ref:** Hauge (Nor)
Scotland: Douglas - McNamara, Pressley, Wilkie, Naysmith, Fletcher, Dailly, Ferguson, McCann (Pearson 71), Dickov (K Miller 66), McFadden (Hutchison 90).
Holland: Van der Sar - Ooijer, Stam, F De Boer, Van Bronckhorst (Seedorf 46), Van der Meyde, Cocu, Davids (Van der Vaart 60), Overmars, Kluivert (Makaay 77), Van Nistelrooy.

Nov 15 - Valencia
Spain 2 (Raul 20, H Berg og 85)
Norway 1 (Iversen 14)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 53,000. **Ref:** Poll (Eng)
Spain: Casillas - Michel Salgado, Ivan Helguera, Marchena, Puyol, Etxeberria (Joaquin 77), Albelda, Baraja, Reyes (Vicente 77), Raul, Fernando Torres (Valeron 68).
Norway: E Johnsen - Basma, H Berg, Lundekvam, Riise, R Strand (Brattbakk 25), Iversen (F Johnsen 77), Andresen (R Berg 87), Andersen, Solli, T A Flo.

Play-offs, 2nd legs

Nov 19 - Amsterdam
Holland 6 (Sneijder 14, Ooijer 32, Van Nistelrooy 37, 51, 67, F De Boer 65)
Scotland 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 51,000. **Ref:** Michel (Slk)
Holland 6-1 on agg
Holland: Van der Sar - Reiziger, Ooijer (F De Boer 46), Cocu, Bouma (Seedorf 68), Van der Meyde, Sneijder, Davids, Overmars, Van der Vaart, Van Nistelrooy (Kluivert 77).
Scotland: Douglas - McNamara, Pressley, Wilkie, Naysmith (Ross 46), McCann (K Miller 63), Ferguson, Rae, Fletcher, McFadden, Dickov (Crawford 46).

Nov 19 - Oslo
Norway 0
Spain 3 (Raul 34, Vicente 49, Etxeberria 55)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 25,106. **Ref:** Collina (Ita)
Spain 5-1 on agg
Norway: E Johnsen (Olsen 61) - Basma, Lundekvam, R Johnsen, Stensaas, Iversen, Andresen (F Johnsen 73), Andersen (H Flo 46), Solli, Riise, T A Flo.
Spain: Casillas - Michel Salgado, Ivan Helguera, Cesar, Puyol, Xabi Alonso, Albelda (Baraja 84), Etxeberria (Joaquin 77), Valeron (Guti 73), Vicente, Raul.

Nov 19 - Ljubljana
Slovenia 0
Croatia 1 (Prso 61)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 9,000. **Ref:** Meier (Swi)
Croatia 2-1 on agg
Slovenia: Dabanovic - Cipot (Bulajic 90), Karic, Vugdalic, Knavs, Sukalo (Rakovic 69), N Ceh, Zahovic, Pavlin, Rudonja (Kapic 46), Acimovic.
Croatia: Pletikosa - Srna, Simunic (Babic 53), R Kovac, Tudor, Zivkovic, Rapajic (Tomas 69), Rosso, Prso (J Leko 76), N Kovac, Sokota. *Sent off: Tudor 59min.*

Nov 19 - Istanbul
Turkey 2 (Ilhan 21, Hakan Sukur 64)
Latvia 2 (Laizans 66, Verpakovskis 77)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Frisk (Swe)
Latvia 3-2 on agg
Turkey: Omer - Umit Davala (Hasan Sas 78), Bulent, Ibrahim Uzulmez, Deniz, Emre Belozoglu, Tumer (Gokdeniz 60), Tugay (Tuncay 80), Nihat, Hakan Sukur, Ilhan.
Latvia: Kolinko - Stepanovs, Astafjevs, Zemlinskis, Laizans, Zirnis, Isakovs, Bleidelis, Verpakovskis, Rubins, Rimkus (Stolcers 79).

Nov 19 - Cardiff
Wales 0
Russia 1 (Evseev 23)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 73,062. **Ref:** Mejuto Gonzalez (Spa)
Russia 1-0 on agg
Wales: P Jones - Delaney, Melville, Gabbidon, Barnard, Speed, Johnson (Earnshaw 58), Savage, Koumas (Blake 74), Giggs, Hartson.
Russia: Malafeev - Evseev, Sennikov, Smertin, Alenichev, Ignashevich, Onopko, Gusev, Titov (Radimov 59), Izmailov, Bulykin.

Winners qualify for finals

ASIAN CUP 2004 QUALIFIERS

Group A

Nov 8 - Tashkent
Hong Kong 0
Tajikistan 0

Nov 8 - Tashkent
Uzbekistan 3 (Shatskikh 23, Shishelov 27, 70)
Thailand 0
HT: 2-0

Nov 10 - Tashkent
Hong Kong 2 (Siang Sai-ho 28, Wong Sun-liu 69)
Thailand 1 (Datsakorn 64)
HT: 1-0

Nov 10 - Tashkent
Tajikistan 0
Uzbekistan 0

Nov 17 - Bangkok
Hong Kong 0
Thailand 4 (Manit 24, Datsakorn 35, Sarayoot 79, pen 88)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 10,000
Sent off: Chan Ka-ki (Hong Kong) 88min

Nov 17 - Bangkok
Uzbekistan 4 (Shishelov 8, 36, Kapadze 50, Koshelev 61)
Tajikistan 1 (Burkhanov 65)
HT: 2-0

Nov 19 - Bangkok
Tajikistan 0
Thailand 1 (Therdsak pen 83)
HT: 0-0

Nov 19 - Bangkok
Hong Kong 0
Uzbekistan 1 (Shirshov 32)
HT: 0-1

Nov 21 - Bangkok
Hong Kong 0
Tajikistan 1 (Muhidinov 68)
HT: 0-0
Sent off: Hakimov (Tajikistan) 50min; Chan Ho-man 83min, Law Chung-bung 88min (both Hong Kong)

Nov 21 - Bangkok
Thailand 4 (Manit 38, Nirut 56, Piyawat 78, Sarayoot 81)
Uzbekistan 1 (Koshelev 88)
HT: 1-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Uzbekistan	6	4	1	1	13	6	13
Thailand	6	3	0	3	10	7	9
Tajikistan	6	2	2	2	3	5	8
Hong Kong	6	1	1	4	3	11	4

06.11.03 .....Thailand-Tajikistan 0-1
06.11.03 .....Hong Kong-Uzbekistan 1-4
08.11.03 .....Hong Kong-Tajikistan 0-0
08.11.03 .....Uzbekistan-Thailand 3-0
10.11.03 .....Hong Kong-Thailand 2-1
10.11.03 .....Tajikistan-Uzbekistan 0-0
17.11.03 .....Hong Kong-Thailand 0-4
17.11.03 .....Uzbekistan-Tajikistan 4-1
19.11.03 .....Tajikistan-Thailand 0-1
19.11.03 .....Hong Kong-Uzbekistan 0-1
21.11.03 .....Hong Kong-Tajikistan 0-1
21.11.03 .....Thailand-Uzbekistan 4-1

Group B

Nov 19 - Doha
Qatar 2 (Basheer 10, Mustafa 28)
Singapore 0
HT: 2-0

Nov 29 - Singapore
Singapore 0
Qatar 2 (Koni 42, Basheer 55)
HT: 0-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kuwait	6	5	1	0	17	5	16
Qatar	6	3	2	1	10	6	11
Singapore	6	1	1	4	3	11	4
Palestine	6	0	2	4	3	11	2

04.09.03 .....Singapore-Kuwait 1-3
14.09.03 .....Kuwait-Qatar 2-1
20.09.03 .....Qatar-Kuwait 2-2
24.09.03 .....Palestine-Qatar 1-1
27.09.03 .....Kuwait-Singapore 4-0
27.09.03 .....Qatar-Palestine 2-1
05.10.03 .....Kuwait-Palestine 2-1
08.10.03 .....Palestine-Kuwait 0-4
19.10.03 .....Singapore-Palestine 2-0
22.10.03 .....Palestine-Singapore 0-0
19.11.03 .....Qatar-Singapore 2-0
29.11.03 .....Singapore-Qatar 0-2

Group C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Saudi Arabia	6	6	0	0	31	1	18
Indonesia	6	3	1	2	9	13	10
Yemen	6	2	1	3	15	15	7
Bhutan	6	0	0	6	0	26	0

06.10.03 .....Saudi Arabia-Yemen 7-0
06.10.03 .....Indonesia-Bhutan 2-0
08.10.03 .....Yemen-Indonesia 0-3
08.10.03 .....Saudi Arabia-Bhutan 6-0
10.10.03 .....Saudi Arabia-Indonesia 5-0
10.10.03 .....Bhutan-Yemen 0-8
13.10.03 .....Yemen-Saudi Arabia 1-3
13.10.03 .....Bhutan-Indonesia 0-2
15.10.03 .....Indonesia-Yemen 2-2
15.10.03 .....Bhutan-Saudi Arabia 0-4
17.10.03 .....Indonesia-Saudi Arabia 0-6
17.10.03 .....Yemen-Bhutan 4-0

Group D

Nov 12 - Tehran
Iran 1 (Daei pen 54)
North Korea 0
HT: 0-0
Match abandoned after 60mins when the North Korean players walked off the pitch in protest at an object being thrown from the crowd

Nov 12 - Beirut
Lebanon 0
Jordan 2 (Sheikh 37, Al-Shaqran 65)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 15,000

Nov 18 - Amman
Jordan 3 (Shilbaya 7, Al-Shboul 89, Zboun 90)
North Korea 0
HT: 1-0

Nov 19 - Beirut
Lebanon 0
Iran 3 (Daei pen 37, Golmohammadi 61, Vahedinikbakht 80)
HT: 0-1
Sent off: Atwi (Lebanon)

Nov 28 - Tehran
Iran 1 (Daei 22)
Lebanon 0
HT: 1-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iran	5	4	0	1	13	5	12
Jordan	5	4	0	1	10	6	12
Lebanon	6	1	1	4	2	8	4
North Korea	4	0	1	3	2	8	1

04.09.03 .....North Korea-Lebanon 0-1
05.09.03 .....Iran-Jordan 4-1
26.09.03 .....Jordan-Iran 3-2
17.10.03 .....Jordan-Lebanon 1-0
27.10.03 .....North Korea-Iran 1-3
03.11.03 .....Lebanon-North Korea 1-1
12.11.03 .....Iran-North Korea .....*abandoned*
12.11.03 .....Lebanon-Jordan 0-2
18.11.03 .....Jordan-North Korea 3-0
19.11.03 .....Lebanon-Iran 0-3
28.11.03 .....Iran-Lebanon 1-0
16.12.03 .....North Korea-Jordan

Group E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Oman	6	5	0	1	26	2	15
South Korea	6	4	0	2	30	4	12
Vietnam	6	3	0	3	8	13	9
Nepal	6	0	0	6	0	45	0

25.09.03 .....Nepal-Oman 0-9
25.09.03 .....South Korea-Vietnam 5-0
27.09.03 .....Vietnam-Nepal 5-0
27.09.03 .....South Korea-Oman 1-0
29.09.03 .....Oman-Vietnam 6-0
29.09.03 .....South Korea-Nepal 16-0
19.10.03 .....Oman-Nepal 6-0
19.10.03 .....South Korea-Vietnam 0-1
21.10.03 .....Vietnam-Nepal 2-0
21.10.03 .....Oman-South Korea 3-1
24.10.03 .....South Korea-Nepal 7-0
24.10.03 .....Oman-Vietnam 2-0

Group F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iraq	6	4	1	1	16	4	13
Bahrain	6	4	1	1	14	9	13
Malaysia	6	1	2	3	9	12	5
Myanmar	6	1	0	5	4	18	3

08.10.03 .....Bahrain-Iraq 1-5
08.10.03 .....Malaysia-Myanmar 4-0
10.10.03 .....Myanmar-Bahrain 1-3
10.10.03 .....Malaysia-Iraq 0-0
12.10.03 .....Iraq-Myanmar 3-0
12.10.03 .....Malaysia-Bahrain 2-2
20.10.03 .....Malaysia-Iraq 1-5
20.10.03 .....Bahrain-Myanmar 4-0
22.10.03 .....Myanmar-Iraq 1-3
22.10.03 .....Bahrain-Malaysia 3-1
24.10.03 .....Malaysia-Myanmar 1-2
24.10.03 .....Bahrain-Iraq 1-0

Group G

Nov 9 - Balkanabat
Turkmenistan 1 (Rejepmurad 9)
Sri Lanka 0
HT: 1-0

Nov 12 - Ashgabat
Turkmenistan 3
Sri Lanka 0

Nov 14 - Sharjah
United Arab Emirates 3 (Yaslam 45, Omar 65, Rashed 78)
Syria 1 (Rafe 34)
HT: 1-1

Nov 18 - Dubai
United Arab Emirates 3 (Omar pen 11, Khater 40, Matar 61)
Sri Lanka 1 (Channa 31)
HT: 2-1

Nov 22 - Dubai
United Arab Emirates 3 (Juma 45, 79, Omar 87)
Sri Lanka 0
HT: 1-0
Sent off: Ezimir (Sri Lanka) 67min

Nov 28 - Aleppo
Syria 1 (Sari 10)
Turkmenistan 1 (Urazov 16)
HT: 1-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
UAE	6	4	1	1	13	5	13
Turkmenistan	5	3	2	0	7	2	11
Syria	5	2	1	2	16	7	7
Sri Lanka	6	0	0	6	1	23	0

15.10.03 .....Syria-Sri Lanka 5-0
18.10.03 .....Syria-Sri Lanka 8-0
19.10.03 .....Turkmenistan-UAE 1-0
30.10.03 .....UAE-Turkmenistan 1-1
07.11.03 .....Syria-UAE 1-3
09.11.03 .....Turkmenistan-Sri Lanka 1-0
12.11.03 .....Turkmenistan-Sri Lanka 3-0
14.11.03 .....UAE-Syria 3-1
18.11.03 .....UAE-Sri Lanka 3-1
22.11.03 .....UAE-Sri Lanka 3-0
28.11.03 .....Syria-Turkmenistan 1-1
03.12.03 .....Turkmenistan-Syria

Group winners and runners-up qualify for finals; China (hosts) and Japan (holders) qualify automatically for finals

EUROPE

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A

November 25

Anderlecht (Blg) 1 (Tihinen 70)
Lyon (Fra) 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,779. **Ref:** Messina (Ita)
Anderlecht: Zitka - Tihinen, Kompany, Deschacht, Zewlakow (Hendrikx 68), Hasi, Baseggio, Kolar (lachtchouk 89), Zetterberg (Vanderhaeghe 84), Wilhelmsson, Mornar.
Lyon: Puydebois - Reveillere, Edmilson, Muller, Berthod (Cacapa 81), Govou, Diarra (Carriere 74), Luyindula, Juninho, Malouda, Elber.

Celtic (Sco) 0
Bayern Munich (Ger) 0
Att: 59,506. **Ref:** Temmink (Hol)
Celtic: Hedman - Varga, Balde, McNamara, Agathe (Miller 62), Lennon, Petrov, Sutton, Thompson, Larsson, Hartson (Sylla 86).
Bayern: Kahn - Sagnol, Kuffour, Kovac, Lizarazu, Salihamidzic, Jeremies, Ballack, Hargreaves, Makaay, Santa Cruz (Pizarro 72).

GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Celtic	5	2	1	2	6	4	7
Anderlecht	5	2	1	2	4	5	7
Lyon	5	2	1	2	4	5	7
Bayern Munich	5	1	3	1	5	5	6

Dec 10
Bayern Munich v Anderlecht
Lyon v Celtic

Group B

November 25

Internazionale (Ita) 1 (Vieri 32)
Arsenal (Eng) 5 (Henry 25, 85, Ljungberg 49, Edu 87, Pires 89)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 44,884. **Ref:** Stark (Ger)
Inter: Toldo - Cordoba, Materazzi, Cannavaro (Pasquale 59), J Zanetti, C Zanetti, Lamouchi (Almeyda 57), Brechet, Martins, Vieri, Van der Meyde (Cruz 69).
Arsenal: Lehmann - Toure, Campbell, Cygan, Cole, Ljungberg, Parlour, Edu, Pires, Kanu (Gilberto Silva 73), Henry (Aliadiere 89).

Lokomotiv Moscow (Rus) 3 (Buznikin 28, Ignashevich pen 45, Parks 89)
Kyiv Dynamo (Ukr) 2 (Bialkevich 37, Shatskikh 65)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Dauden Ibanez (Spa)
Lokomotiv: Ovchinnikov - Evseev, Pachinin, Sennikov, Ignashevich, Lekgetho, Maminov, Khokhlov, Buznikin (Parks 83; Nizhegorodov 90), Loskov, Ashvetia.
Dynamo: Shovkovskyi - Sablic, Gavrancic, Nesmachnyi, Husiev, Onyshenko (Peev 66), Ghioane (Khatskevich 57), Dmytrulin, Bialkevich, Shatskikh, Diogo Rincon.

GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lokomotiv M	5	2	2	1	7	5	8
Arsenal	5	2	1	2	7	6	7
Internazionale	5	2	1	2	7	10	7
Kyiv Dynamo	5	2	0	3	7	7	6

Dec 10
Arsenal v Lokomotiv Moscow
Kyiv Dynamo v Internazionale

Group C

November 25

Deportivo La Coruna (Spa) 3 (Hector 22, Valeron 51, Luque 71)
AEK Athens (Gre) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Riley (Eng)
Deportivo: Molina - Hector, Cesar (Romero 72), Jorge Andrade, Capdevila, Sergio, Duscher, Valeron (Luque 59), Victor (Scaloni 69), Fran, Pandiani.
AEK: Mihailidis - Borbokis, Amponsah, Kapsis, Kasapis (Kostenoglou 44), Lakis (Petkov 73), Katsouranis, Zagorakis, Tsartas, Okkas (Konstantinidis 77), Nalitzis.

Monaco (Fra) 1 (Morientes 33)
PSV Eindhoven (Hol) 1 (Vennegoor of Hesselink 84)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 17,000. **Ref:** Siric (Cro)
Monaco: Roma - Givet, Squillaci, Rodriguez, Evra (Ibarra 75), Giuly, Zikos, Bernardi, Rothen, Morientes (Adebayor 81), Prso (Cisse 59). *Sent off: Zikos 83min, Giuly 88min.*
PSV: Waterreus - Bogelund (Colin 72), Faber, Bouma, Lee (De Jong 78), Park, Lucius, Vogel, Robben, Vonlanthen (Vennegoor of Hesselink 64), Kezman. *Sent off: Lucius 50min.*

GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Monaco	5	3	1	1	15	6	10
Dep La Coruna	5	3	1	1	10	9	10
PSV Eindhoven	5	2	1	2	5	5	7
AEK Athens	5	0	1	4	1	11	1

Dec 10
AEK Athens v Monaco
PSV Eindhoven v Deportivo La Coruna

Group D

November 25

Olympiakos (Gre) 2 (Stoltidis 58, Castillo 71)
Real Sociedad (Spa) 2 (Gabilondo 31, Schurrer 73)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 14,000. **Ref:** Hamer (Lux)
Olympiakos: Katergiannakis - Pantos, Anatolakis, Antzas (Kafes 46), Venetidis (Tatsis 86), Mavrogenidis (Niniadis 53), Karembeu, Stoltidis, Georgiadis, Castillo, Giovanni.
Sociedad: Westerveld - Lopez Rekarte, Jauregi, Schurrer, Aranzabal, Karpin (Aranburu 80), Xabi Alonso (Boris 89), Alkiza, Gabilondo, Nihat (Lee 74), Kovacevic. *Sent off: Kovacevic 68min.*

December 2

Galatasaray (Tur) 2 (Hakan Sukur 47, 90)
Juventus (Ita) 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 45,000. **Ref:** Milton Nielsen (Den)
(Played in Dortmund, Germany)
Galatasaray: Mondragon - Tamas, De Boer (Bulent 84), Orhan, Cesar Prates (Hasan Sas 44), Sabri, Petre, Ergun, Hakan Unsal, Hakan Sukur (Cihan 90), Berkant.
Juventus: Chimenti - Tudor, Ferrara, Iuliano (Appiah 74), Pessotto, Zalayeta, Conte (Camoranesi 86), Davids, Maresca, Miccoli, Di Vaio.

GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Juventus	5	3	1	1	8	6	10
Real Sociedad	5	2	2	1	7	7	8
Galatasaray	5	2	0	3	5	7	6
Olympiakos	5	1	1	3	6	6	4

Dec 10
Juventus v Olympiakos
Real Sociedad v Galatasaray

Group E

November 26

Panathinaikos (Gre) 0
Manchester United (Eng) 1 (Forlan 85)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 6,890. **Ref:** Wegereef (Hol)
Panathinaikos: Nikopolidis - Seitaridis, Henriksen, Goumas, Munch, Sanmartean (Epalle 46), Basinas, Zutautas, Maric, Papadopoulos (Sapanis 82), Constantinou (Vlaovic 75).
Man Utd: Howard - O'Shea, Ferdinand, Silvestre, Fortune, Cristiano Ronaldo, Fletcher (Bellion 75), Butt, Kleberson, Giggs, Forlan.

Stuttgart (Ger) 1 (Wenzel 45)
Rangers (Sco) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 50,348. **Ref:** Mejuto Gonzalez (Spa)
Stuttgart: Hildebrand - Hinkel, Fernando Meira, Wenzel, Lahm, Soldo, Hleb (Centurion 73), Heldt (Tiffert 50), Meissner, Kuranyi, Szabics (Branco 89).
Rangers: Klos - Ross (Ostenstad 71), Berg, Khizanishvili, Ball, Ricksen, Capucho, Vanoli (Mols 56), Hughes, Arveladze, Lovenkrands (Burke 79).

GROUP E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Stuttgart	5	4	0	1	9	4	12
Manchester Utd	5	4	0	1	11	2	12
Rangers	5	1	1	3	3	7	4
Panathinaikos	5	0	1	4	2	12	1

Dec 9
Manchester United v Stuttgart
Rangers v Panathinaikos

Group F

November 26

Marseille (Fra) 1 (Hossam 63)
Real Madrid (Spa) 2 (Beckham 35, Ronaldo 73)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 58,000. **Ref:** Frisk (Swe)
Marseille: Runje - Meite, Van Buyten, Christanval, Ecker, Meriem, Hemdani, Celestini, Vachousek (Sychev 72), Drogba, Hossam (Fernandao 82).
Real Madrid: Casillas - Michel Salgado, Ivan Helguera, Raul Bravo, Roberto Carlos (Solari 82), Figo, Beckham, Cambiasso, Zidane (Guti 87), Raul, Ronaldo (Ruben 90).

FC Porto (Por) 2 (McCarthy 25, 50)
Partizan Belgrade (Ser) 1 (Delibasic 90)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 22,177. **Ref:** Allaerts (Blg)
Porto: Vitor Baia - Paulo Ferreira, Jorge Costa, Ricardo Carvalho, Mario Silva, Bosingwa (Pedro Mendes 46), Costinha, Deco, Maniche, McCarthy (Hugo Almeida 67), Deriel (Jankauskas 80).
Partizan: Pantic - Djordjevic, Stojanoski (Drulovic 78), Savic, Cirkovic (Radovic 38), Duljaj, Ivic, Malbasa, Ilic (Cakar 58), Iliev, Delibasic.

GROUP F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Madrid	5	4	1	0	10	4	13
FC Porto	5	3	1	1	8	7	10
Marseille	5	1	0	4	8	10	3
Partizan Belgrade	5	0	2	3	2	7	2

Dec 9
Partizan Belgrade v Marseille
Real Madrid v FC Porto

Group G

November 26

Chelsea (Eng) 0
Sparta Prague (Cze) 0
Att: 40,152. **Ref:** Larsen (Den)
Chelsea: Cudicini - Melchiot, Gallas, Terry, Bridge, Makelele, Lampard, Cole (Geremi 72), Duff, Mutu, Crespo (Gudjohnsen 73).
Sparta: Blazek - Pergl, Homola, Hubschman, Labant, Poborsky, Kovac, Krmas, Michalik (I Gluscevic 71), Zelenka (Flachbart 86), Sionko (Jezek 90).

Lazio (Ita) 1 (Muzzi 56)
Besiktas (Tur) 1 (Pancu pen 45)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 49,000. **Ref:** Merk (Ger)
Lazio: Peruzzi - Oddo, Stam, Negro, Favalli (Zauri 53), Albertini, Giannichedda (Fiore 46), Sergio Conceicao (Muzzi 46), Stankovic, Corradi, Inzaghi.
Besiktas: Cordoba - Emre, Ronaldo, Zago, Okan, Tayfur, Giunti (Ahmet Yildirim 90), Ibrahim, Pancu, Sergen (Tumer 80), Ilhan.

GROUP G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea	5	3	1	1	7	3	10
Besiktas	5	2	1	2	5	5	7
Sparta Prague	5	1	2	2	4	5	5
Lazio	5	1	2	2	6	9	5

Dec 9
Besiktas v Chelsea
Sparta Prague v Lazio

Group H

November 26

Ajax (Hol) 0
Milan (Ita) 1 (Shevchenko 52)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 50,210. **Ref:** Meier (Swi)
Ajax: Lobont - De Jong, Yakubu, Heitinga, Escude, Maxwell, Galasek, Obodai (Wamberto 54), Mitea (Sikora 77), Sneijder, Ibrahimovic (Litmanen 40).
Milan: Dida - Cafu, Laursen (Pancaro 46), Maldini, Costacurta, Gattuso, Pirlo, Kaka (Rui Costa 77), Seedorf, Shevchenko, Inzaghi (Ambrosini 72).

Celta Vigo (Spa) 1 (Mostovoi 74)
Club Brugge (Blg) 1 (Lange 90)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 17,000. **Ref:** Poulat (Fra)
Celta: Cavallero (Pinto 62) - Angel, Sergio, Berizzo, Silvinho (Lopez 46), Jose Ignacio, Luccin, Jesuli, Mostovoi (Jandro 78), Juanfran, Milosevic.
Brugge: Verlinden - De Cock, Simons, Rozehnal, Gvozdenovic (Lange 81), Englebert, Clement, Ceh (Roelandts 85), Martens, Verheyen, Saeternes.

GROUP H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Milan	5	3	1	1	3	1	10
Ajax	5	2	0	3	5	5	6
Celta Vigo	5	1	3	1	5	5	6
Club Brugge	5	1	2	2	3	5	5

Dec 9
Club Brugge v Ajax
Milan v Celta Vigo

Top two from each group qualify for second round

UEFA CUP

2nd rnd, 2nd legs

November 27

Aris Salonika (Gre) 1 (N Papadopoulos 90)
Perugia (Ita) 1 (Margiotta 28)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Leuba (Swi)
Perugia 3-1 on agg

Auxerre (Fra) 4 (Cisse 21, 48, Kapo 28, Kalou 57)
Utrecht (Hol) 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Vidlak (Cze)
Auxerre 4-0 on agg

Barcelona (Spa) 2 (Saviola 33, Luis Garcia 43)
Panionios (Gre) 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Colombo (Fra)
Sent off: Luis Enrique (Barcelona) 26min
Barcelona 5-0 on agg

Brondby (Den) 2 (Jakobsson pen 16, Jonson 71)
Schalke (Ger) 1 (Agali 55)
Aet. **HT:** 1-0. **90mins:** 2-1. **Ref:** Benes (Cze)
Agg 3-3. Brondby 3-1 on pens

Debrecen (Hun) 0
PAOK Salonika (Gre) 0
Ref: Yefet (Isr)
Agg 1-1. Debrecen on away goals

Dinamo Bucharest (Rom) 3 (Danciulescu 28, pen 73, Iordache 58)
Moscow Spartak (Rus) 1 (Parfyonov pen 85)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Kapitanis (Cyp)
Sent off: Barcauan (Dinamo) 87min
Spartak 5-3 on agg

Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk (Ukr) 1 (Venhlynskyi 64)
Dinamo Zagreb (Cro) 1 (Sedloski 62)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Szabo (Hun)
Dnipro 3-1 on agg

Groclin Grodzisk (Pol) 0
Manchester City (Eng) 0
Ref: Frojdfeldt (Swe)
Agg 1-1. Groclin on away goals

Hajduk Split (Cro) 1 (Bule 33)
Roma (Ita) 1 (Cassano 85)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Dougal (Sco)
Roma 2-1 on agg

Hearts (Sco) 0
Bordeaux (Fra) 2 (Riera 8, Feindouno 66)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Gilewski (Pol)
Bordeaux 2-1 on agg

UEFA Cup

Arm's length...Sochaux's Oruma holds off Flavio Conceicao of Dortmund

Dortmund crash out

PRESSURE ON COACH Matthias Sammer edged up another notch as Borussia Dortmund became the most prominent casualties of the UEFA Cup second round. They were beaten 6-2 on aggregate by Sochaux in the midst of indifferent League form and having dropped into the UEFA Cup after failing to make it through the Champions League qualifiers.

Salvatore Gambino was sent off after only five minutes of the second leg, in France, for pulling down striker Franci Santos in the box. He thus cleared the way for Pierre-Alain Frau to score from the penalty spot and put the hosts on the way to a comfortable 4-0 victory. The first leg was a 2-2 draw.

Feyenoord, Dortmund's conquerors in the 2002 UEFA Cup Final, were also surprising fallers. They failed to recover from losing 2-0 at home to Teplice, only managing a 1-1 draw in the Czech Republic.

Other former European champions knocked out were Red Star Belgrade, who drew 0-0 away to Rosenborg, then lost 1-0 at home. The latter game was Age Hareide's last as the Trondheim side's coach before taking over as Norway boss from Nils Johan Semb. Ola By Rise will be in charge of Rosenborg when European competition resumes in the spring.

Benfica are one former European champions to survive after beating Molde 5-1 overall. However, Lisbon rivals Sporting lost 4-1 to Genclerbirligi. Turkish pain after the national team's Euro 2004 failure was further eased by Gaziantepspor, who won 3-1 in Lens and 6-1 on aggregate.

Dortmund were not the only German fallers. Schalke went out on penalties to Brondby after winning their home leg only 2-1. In the return, Andreas Jakobsson converted a 16th-minute penalty, Victor Agali equalised after the interval and then Mattias Jonson struck in the 71st minute to put the tie into extra-time.

Liverpool and Newcastle United maintained English interest in the third round after 1-0 home victories over Steaua Bucharest and Basle respectively. But lacklustre Manchester City fell to Poland's European debutants Groclin Grodzisk on the away goals rule.

Italy (Perugia, Parma and Roma) and France (Auxerre, Bordeaux and Sochaux) will both have strong representation in the third round, while Spain have the prospect of four teams progressing. Barcelona, Mallorca and Villarreal are already through, while Valencia face Israel's Maccabi Haifa in their second round, second leg game on December 11. The tie was delayed from the main matchday because of security concerns.

Keir Radnedge

Lens (Fra) 1 (Mehmet og 74)
Gaziantepspor (Tur) 3 (Bulent 39, Erhan 55, Lazarov pen 85)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Messner (Aut)
Sent off: Moreira (Lens) 62min
Gaziantepspor 6-1 on agg

Levski Sofia (Bul) 0
Slavia Prague (Cze) 0
Ref: Vollquartz (Den)
Agg 2-2. Levski on away goals

Liverpool (Eng) 1 (Kewell 49)
Steaua Bucharest (Rom) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Meyer (Ger)
Liverpool 2-1 on agg

Mallorca (Spa) 1 (Campano 67)
FC Copenhagen (Den) 1 (Albrechtsen 86)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Wack (Ger)
Mallorca 3-2 on agg

Molde (Nor) 0
Benfica (Por) 2 (Tiago 35, 42)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** D'Urso (Eng)
Benfica 5-1 on agg

Newcastle United (Eng) 1 (Smiljanic og 14)
Basle (Swi) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Fisker (Den)
Newcastle 4-2 on agg

Parma (Ita) 5 (Carbone 1, 7, Filippini 43, Sorrentino 47, 86)
Salzburg (Aut) 0
HT: 3-0. **Ref:** Ivanov (Rus)
Parma 9-0 on agg

Red Star Belgrade (Ser) 0
Rosenborg (Nor) 1 (Brattbakk 51)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Gomes Costa (Por)
Rosenborg 1-0 on agg

Sochaux (Fra) 4 (Frau pen 6, Santos 67, Oruma 76, Mathieu 89)
Borussia Dortmund (Ger) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Baskakov (Rus)
Sent off: Gambino (Dortmund) 5min
Sochaux 6-2 on agg

Sporting Lisbon (Por) 0
Genclerbirligi (Tur) 3 (Ali Tandogan 44, Mario Sergio og 45, Veysel 50)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Verbist (Blg)
Genclerbirligi 4-1 on agg

Teplice (Cze) 1 (Horvath pen 40)
Feyenoord (Hol) 1 (Snoyl 38)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Layec (Fra)
Teplice 3-1 on agg

Torpedo Moscow (Rus) 1 (Semshov 71)
Villarreal (Spa) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Ingvarsson (Swe)
Villarreal 2-1 on agg

Wisla Krakow (Pol) 0
Valerenga (Nor) 0
Aet. **Ref:** Almeida Costa (Por)
Sent off: Jalland (Valerenga) 119min
Agg 0-0. Valerenga 4-3 on pens

Still to play:
Dec 11: Maccabi Haifa (Isr) v Valencia (Spa)
– 0-0 after 1st leg

AUSTRIA

Nov 8: Bregenz 1 Pasching 2; Mattersburg 0 Grazer AK 0; Sturm Graz 2 Admira 0.
Nov 9: Austria Wien 0 Salzburg 0; Karnten 2 Rapid Wien 0.
Nov 22: Admira 1 Karnten 0; Pasching 2 Austria Wien 4; Rapid Wien 2 Bregenz 2.
Nov 23: Grazer AK 1 Sturm Graz 0; Salzburg 4 Mattersburg 0.
Nov 29: Austria Wien 5 Admira 1; Mattersburg 1 Rapid Wien 1; Sturm Graz 2 Pasching 2.
Nov 30: Bregenz 1 Grazer AK 0; Karnten 0 Salzburg 3.

AUSTRIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Austria Wien	19	11	5	3	36	15	38
Rapid Wien	19	11	4	4	34	25	37
Grazer AK	19	10	4	5	28	19	34
Bregenz	19	9	4	6	30	29	31
Pasching	19	8	4	7	31	30	28
Admira	19	6	4	9	24	28	22
Mattersburg	19	5	7	7	21	29	22
Salzburg	19	6	2	11	27	24	20
Sturm Graz	19	4	5	10	19	28	17
Karnten	19	3	5	11	15	38	14

BELARUS

BELARUS – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Gomel	30	23	5	2	56	12	74
BATE Borisov	30	20	6	4	70	21	66
Dinamo Minsk	30	20	4	6	62	24	64
Torpedo Minsk	30	19	7	4	54	20	64
Shakhtyor	30	19	7	4	60	23	64
Torpedo Zhodino	30	13	10	7	44	25	49
Neman	30	10	9	11	24	35	39
Naftan	30	10	5	15	39	49	35
Dnepr-Transmash	30	8	10	12	38	46	34
Belshina	30	8	8	14	44	50	32
Dinamo Brest	30	5	12	13	21	49	27
Zvezda VA BDU	30	7	4	19	23	64	25
Darida	30	7	4	19	22	45	25
Slavia Mozyr	30	6	7	17	29	64	25
Lokomotiv	30	5	9	16	16	42	24
Molodechno	30	3	7	20	19	52	16

BELGIUM

Friday, November 7

Gent 1 (Mrdakovic 65)
Genk 1 (De Brul og 25) Att: 9,600

Saturday, November 8

Heusden-Zolder 2 (Origi 43, De Conde 51)
Germinal Beerschot 0 Att: 5,500

La Louviere 3 (Murcy 17, 65, Van den Bossche 29)
Lokeren 2 (Bance 1, 41) Att: 6,000

Royal Antwerp 2 (Cisse 20, Pinxten 65)
Cercle Brugge 2 (Jbari 21, 85) Att: 7,000

St Truiden 3 (Buvens 57, Mbonabucya 59, 62)
Lierse 2 (Mitu 34, 84) Att: 8,000

Westerlo 1 (Wagemakers 37)
Mouscron 1 (Dugardein 22) Att: 4,000

Sunday, November 9

Anderlecht 1 (Mornar 23)
Standard 4 (Kaklamanos 8, 61, Mpenza 18, Walasiak 54) Att: 25,236

Beveren 2 (Kaiper 53, 75)
Mons 0 Att: 3,000

Club Brugge 1 (Clement 20)
Charleroi 0 Att: 22,000

Friday, November 21

Germinal Beerschot 2 (Haagdoren 47, Cooreman 72)
Club Brugge 0 Att: 8,500

Mons 0
Anderlecht 2 (De Boeck 5, Wilhelmsson 41) Att: 5,000

Saturday, November 22

Genk 4 (Kpaka 52, Beslija 71, Sigurdsson 75, Vandenbergh 88)
St Truiden 0 Att: 24,896

Lierse 1 (Delorge 38)
Beveren 0 Att: 6,200

Lokeren 0
Charleroi 2 (Dufer 60, Kere 71) Att: 4,600

Mouscron 2 (De Vleeschauwer 36, Mpenza 86)
Heusden-Zolder 1 (Barka 18) Att: 6,289

Standard 3 (Mpenza 20, 62, Sorondo 75)
Westerlo 0 Att: 13,000

Sunday, November 23

Cercle Brugge 1 (Vlahos 1)
Gent 0 Att: 5,300

La Louviere 1 (Siquet 31)
Royal Antwerp 1 (Sergeant 83) Att: 3,500

Saturday, November 29

Anderlecht 2 (Iachtchouk 25, Zetterberg 42)
Lierse 1 (Mitu 27) Att: 24,024

Beveren 3 (Boka 73, Eboue 83, Ne 88)
Genk 1 (Kpaka 45) Att: 6,000

Charleroi 0
Germinal Beerschot 1 (Haagdoren 50) Att: 6,000

Gent 3 (Mrdakovic 50, 62, Ribus 81)
La Louviere 0 Att: 6,800

Royal Antwerp 0
Lokeren 3 (De Beule 14, Kristinsson 44, Baldvinsson 61) Att: 4,000

Westerlo 0
Mons 1 (Ban 3) Att: 4,000

Sunday, November 30

Club Brugge 4 (Van der Heyden 23, Lange 32, 68, Clement 36)
Mouscron 2 (Mpenza 2, Pieroni 90) Att: 22,271

Heusden-Zolder 1 (Janssen 74)
Standard 1 (Mumlek 77) Att: 6,438

St Truiden 0
Cercle Brugge 0 Att: 5,000

BELGIUM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Anderlecht	14	12	1	1	37	11	37
Standard	14	9	2	3	28	11	29
Genk	14	8	3	3	30	18	27
Club Brugge	14	7	3	4	28	18	24
Mouscron	14	6	5	3	24	17	23
St Truiden	14	5	5	4	18	20	20
Gent	14	4	7	3	17	13	19
La Louviere	14	4	7	3	20	17	19
Germinal B	14	5	4	5	12	14	19
Cercle Brugge	14	4	7	3	11	14	19
Westerlo	14	5	4	5	17	22	19
Lierse	14	4	5	5	16	18	17
Beveren	14	5	0	9	16	27	15
Lokeren	14	3	3	8	17	25	12
Mons	14	2	6	6	11	21	12
Royal Antwerp	14	3	3	8	11	29	12
Charleroi	14	2	4	8	7	13	10
Heusden-Zolder	14	2	3	9	11	23	9

LEADING GOALSCORER
9 Andres Mendoza (Club Brugge)

BULGARIA

Nov 7: Slavia 3 Belasitsa 0.
Nov 8: Naftex 1 Cherno More 1; CSKA 1 Rodopa 0; Marek 2 Lokomotiv Sofia 1; Spartak Varna 1 Vidima-Rakovski 2; Botev 1 Chernomorets 1.
Nov 9: Lovech 2 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 1; Makedonska 1 Levski 2.
Nov 21: Levski 3 Marek 0; Lokomotiv Plovdiv 2 Naftex 0.
Nov 22: Chernomorets 0 Lovech 3; Vidima-Rakovski 2 Botev 0; Lokomotiv Sofia 1 Spartak Varna 2; Rodopa 1 Makedonska 0; Belasitsa 0 CSKA 4; Cherno More 0 Slavia 3.
Nov 29: Slavia 2 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 0; Makedonska 1 Belasitsa 3; Marek 2 Rodopa 0; Botev 0 Lokomotiv Sofia 1; Chernomorets 3 Vidima-Rakovski 0.
Nov 30: Lovech 1 Naftex 1; CSKA 2 Cherno More 0; Spartak Varna 0 Levski 2.

BULGARIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CSKA	14	11	2	1	32	9	35
Lok Plovdiv	14	11	1	2	32	11	34
Slavia	14	10	1	3	33	15	31
Levski	14	9	4	1	23	8	31
Lovech	14	8	5	1	20	9	29
Marek	14	7	0	7	20	24	21
Naftex	14	5	4	5	24	17	19
Lok Sofia	14	4	5	5	21	23	17
Spartak Varna	14	5	2	7	18	20	17
Vidima-Rakovski	14	4	4	6	17	22	16
Chernomorets	14	3	4	7	15	23	13
Rodopa	14	4	1	9	12	25	13
Cherno More	14	2	5	7	15	28	11
Makedonska	14	3	1	10	16	28	10
Belasitsa	14	3	1	10	13	31	10
Botev	14	2	2	10	16	34	8

CROATIA

Nov 8: Zadar 3 Marsonia 2; Varteks 1 Osijek 1; Cibalia 1 Slaven 1; Kamen Ingrad 1 Zagreb 1.
Nov 9: Dinamo 2 Rijeka 0; Inker 0 Hajduk 2.
Nov 22: Kamen Ingrad 2 Zadar 2; Zagreb 1 Inker 1; Hajduk 3 Cibalia 1; Slaven 2 Varteks 1; Rijeka 3 Marsonia 1.
Nov 23: Osijek 3 Dinamo 2.
Nov 29: Zadar 3 Rijeka 2; Marsonia 1 Osijek 2; Cibalia 1 Zagreb 1; Inker 3 Kamen Ingrad 1.
Nov 30: Varteks 2 Hajduk 0.
Dec 1: Dinamo 4 Slaven 0.

CROATIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo	16	11	4	1	39	12	37
Hajduk	16	12	1	3	30	13	37
Osijek	16	7	2	7	25	28	23
Kamen Ingrad	16	6	4	6	25	19	22
Inker	16	5	7	4	20	18	22
Zadar	16	5	5	6	28	36	20
Rijeka	16	4	7	5	19	18	19
Slaven	16	4	7	5	14	17	19
Varteks	16	4	6	6	15	19	18
Zagreb	16	3	7	6	17	25	16
Cibalia	16	3	4	9	18	28	13
Marsonia	16	3	4	9	19	36	13

CZECH REPUBLIC

Nov 8: Pribram 2 Zlin 4; Olomouc 3 Brno 1; Opava 2 Chmel Blsany 1; Ceske Budejovice 1 Plzen 0; Synot 4 Zizkov 0; Sparta 1 Ostrava 1.
Nov 9: Teplice 1 Jablonec 1.
Nov 10: Liberec 0 Slavia 1.
Nov 16: Zizkov 0 Slavia 0; Plzen 0 Synot 1.
Nov 21: Slavia 0 Ceske Budejovice 1.
Nov 22: Chmel Blsany 1 Synot 3; Plzen 1 Olomouc 3; Brno 1 Pribram 1; Zlin 1 Teplice 0; Jablonec 4 Sparta 2.
Nov 23: Zizkov 0 Liberec 1.
Nov 24: Ostrava 4 Opava 0.
Nov 29: Jablonec 0 Pribram 2; Opava 4 Brno 0; Ceske Budejovice 1 Ostrava 1; Chmel Blsany 0 Liberec 2.
Nov 30: Sparta 3 Teplice 0.
Dec 1: Zlin 1 Olomouc 0.

CZECH REPUBLIC

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ostrava	16	10	6	0	33	12	36
Sparta	16	8	5	3	27	12	29
Olomouc	16	8	3	5	29	16	27
Slavia	16	8	3	5	20	10	27
Zlin	16	8	3	5	19	16	27
Liberec	16	7	5	4	18	12	26
Synot	16	7	4	5	24	21	25
Ceske Budejovice	16	6	4	6	19	20	22
Teplice	16	5	6	5	17	18	21
Brno	16	5	6	5	19	22	21
Opava	16	6	2	8	19	30	20
Pribram	16	5	3	8	21	20	18
Jablonec	16	3	8	5	14	22	17
Plzen	16	3	4	9	13	27	13
Zizkov	16	3	3	10	8	22	12
Chmel Blsany	16	2	3	11	16	36	9

DENMARK

Nov 8: AGF 2 Midtjylland 1.
Nov 9: AaB 3 Nordsjaelland 3; Esbjerg 2 Herfolge 0; OB 1 AB 0; Viborg 0 Frem 0; Brondby 2 FC Copenhagen 2.
Nov 22: Herfolge 1 Brondby 3.

Nov 23: AaB 3 OB 1; Nordsjaelland 2 Esbjerg 0; Midtjylland 0 Viborg 0; FC Copenhagen 1 AGF 1; Frem 1 AB 2.
Nov 29: Esbjerg 4 AaB 2.
Nov 30: Brondby 2 Nordsjaelland 1; AB 3 Midtjylland 3; OB 2 Frem 1; Viborg 0 FC Copenhagen 2; AGF 1 Herfolge 3.

DENMARK

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brondby	19	14	3	2	34	13	45
Esbjerg	19	13	3	3	36	18	42
FC Copenhagen	19	10	6	3	28	15	36
OB	19	10	4	5	38	27	34
AaB	19	8	5	6	29	26	29
Midtjylland	19	7	4	8	32	28	25
AGF	19	7	2	10	28	40	23
Viborg	19	5	6	8	30	29	21
Herfolge	19	5	5	9	21	27	20
Nordsjaelland	19	4	6	9	24	35	18
Frem	19	4	2	13	19	36	14
AB	19	3	2	14	16	41	11

ENGLAND

Saturday, November 8

Arsenal 2 (Pires 69, Ljungberg 79)
Tottenham 1 (Anderton 4) Att: 38,101

Aston Villa 0
Middlesbrough 2 (Zenden 30, Ricketts pen 49) Att: 29,898

Bolton 0
Southampton 0 Att: 25,619

Charlton 3 (Stuart 10, Johansson 69, 76)
Fulham 1 (Davis 89) Att: 26,344

Portsmouth 6 (Stefanovic 17, O'Neil 45, 71, Foxe 63, Berger 75, Aiyegbeni 86)
Leeds 1 (Smith 19) Att: 20,112

Wolverhampton 1 (Iversen 66)
Birmingham 1 (Forssell 49) Att: 28,831

Sunday, November 9

Chelsea 5 (Johnson 23, Crespo 39, Lampard pen 42, Duff 78, Gudjohnsen 84)
Newcastle 0 Att: 41,332

Liverpool 1 (Kewell 76)
Manchester Utd 2 (Giggs 59, 70) Att: 44,159

Manchester City 0
Leicester 3 (Stewart 12, Dickov pen 53, Bent 58) Att: 46,966

Monday, November 10

Blackburn 2 (Babbel 6, Yorke 13)
Everton 1 (Radzinski 49) Att: 22,179

Saturday, November 22

Birmingham 0
Arsenal 3 (Ljungberg 4, Bergkamp 80, Pires 88) Att: 29,588

Everton 2 (Radzinski 16, Kilbane 19)
Wolverhampton 0 Att: 40,190

Leeds 0
Bolton 2 (Davies 16, Giannakopoulos 17) Att: 36,558

Leicester 1 (Ferdinand 39)
Charlton 1 (Di Canio pen 84) Att: 30,242

Manchester Utd 2 (Van Nistelrooy 24, Kleberson 38)
Blackburn 1 (Emerton 62) Att: 67,748

Middlesbrough 0
Liverpool 0 Att: 34,268

Newcastle 3 (Ameobi 57, Shearer 77, 85)
Manchester City 0 Att: 52,159

Southampton 0
Chelsea 1 (Melchiot 47) Att: 32,149

Sunday, November 23

Tottenham 2 (Ricketts 78, Keane 81)
Aston Villa 1 (Allback 66) Att: 33,140

Monday, November 24

Fulham 2 (Saha 30, 33)
Portsmouth 0 Att: 15,624

Saturday, November 29

Aston Villa 1 (Dublin 45)
Southampton 0 Att: 31,285

Blackburn 1 (Gresko 78)
Tottenham 0 Att: 22,802

Bolton 2 (Frandsen 26, Djorkaeff 46)
Everton 0 Att: 27,350

Charlton 0
Leeds 1 (Milner 9) Att: 26,445

Portsmouth 0
Leicester 2 (Ferdinand 31, Bent 59) Att: 20,061

Wolverhampton 1 (Blake 27)
Newcastle 1 (Shearer 31) Att: 29,344

Sunday, November 30

Arsenal 0
Fulham 0 Att: 38,063

Chelsea 1 (Lampard pen 29)
Manchester United 0 Att: 41,932

Liverpool 3 (Gerrard pen 35, Kewell 69, Heskey 78)
Birmingham 1 (Forssell 33) Att: 42,683

Manchester City 0
Middlesbrough 1 (Sun og 30) Att: 46,824

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea	14	11	2	1	28	9	35
Arsenal	14	10	4	0	28	10	34
Man Utd	14	10	1	3	25	9	31
Fulham	14	6	4	4	24	18	22
Charlton	14	6	4	4	20	17	22
Liverpool	14	6	3	5	21	15	21
Newcastle	14	5	5	4	20	19	20
Birmingham	14	5	5	4	12	14	20
Man City	14	5	3	6	22	19	18
Middlesbrough	14	5	3	6	12	15	18
Bolton	14	4	6	4	13	19	18
Southampton	14	4	5	5	10	9	17
Leicester	14	4	3	7	22	22	15
Portsmouth	14	4	3	7	17	20	15
Tottenham	14	4	3	7	13	18	15
Blackburn	14	4	2	8	19	24	14
Aston Villa	14	3	5	6	11	17	14
Everton	14	3	4	7	15	19	13
Wolverhampton	14	2	5	7	9	27	11
Leeds	14	3	2	9	12	33	11

LEADING GOALSCORERS
12 Alan Shearer (Newcastle)
10 Thierry Henry (Arsenal)
9 Ruud Van Nistelrooy (Manchester United)

FRANCE

Saturday, November 8

Le Mans 2 (Peyrelade 33, Cousin 80)
Metz 0 Att: 10,786

Nantes 0
Paris SG 1 (Fiorese 61) Att: 34,310

Nice 2 (Meslin 32, 64)
Bastia 0 Att: 10,000

Rennes 2 (Frei 54, N'Guema 62)
Lille 2 (Manchev 32, 71) Att: 14,000

Sunday, November 9

Ajaccio 0
Monaco 1 (Prso 81) Att: 5,000

Auxerre 3 (Cisse 32, 82, Tainio 40)
Guingamp 0 Att: 7,000

Lens 3 (Utaka 33, Moreira 52, Bakari 54)
Montpellier 2 (Carotti 9, Rouviere 12) Att: 34,300

Marseille 1 (Van Buyten 20)
Lyon 4 (Elber 19, Luyindula 35, 58, Juninho 90) Att: 55,000

Sochaux 3 (Frau 9, Santos 63, Pedretti 89)
Toulouse 1 (Braizat 72) Att: 15,400

Strasbourg 1 (Martins pen 81)
Bordeaux 1 (Chamakh 44) Att: 16,000

Friday, November 21

Lyon 1 (Luyindula pen 90)
Strasbourg 0 Att: 33,682

Saturday, November 22

Bastia 1 (Chimbonda 5)
Nantes 3 (Vahirua 41, Fae 58, Ziani 85) Att: 5,488

Bordeaux 2 (Darcheville pen 45, Feindouno 83)
Rennes 1 (Diatta 24) Att: 20,805

Guingamp 1 (Sikimic 79)
Sochaux 2 (Frau 11, Santos 65) Att: 14,458

Lille 0
Marseille 2 (Drogba 22, Hossam 47) Att: 20,400

Metz 0
Auxerre 2 (Lachuer 56, Cisse 90) Att: 20,106

Monaco 2 (Giuly 58, Morientes 67)
Lens 0 Att: 8,000

Montpellier 3 (Bamogo 28, Rui Pataca 79, 86)
Ajaccio 1 (Bagayoko 44) Att: 11,542

Toulouse 1 (Eduardo 89)
Le Mans 1 (Cousin 45) Att: 14,769

Sunday, November 23

Paris SG 0
Nice 0 Att: 42,785

Saturday, November 29

Ajaccio 2 (Diomede 28, Bagayoko 86)
Toulouse 1 (Ndoye 77) Att: 4,500

Le Mans 4 (Pancrate 12, Peyrelade 24, Cousin 29, Fanchone 84)
Montpellier 0 Att: 10,500

Nantes 0
Monaco 1 (Bernardi 74) Att: 36,500

Nice 1 (Meslin 42)
Metz 1 (Maoulida 19) Att: 10,500

Rennes 3 (Arribage 24, Puydebois og 38, Frei 74)
Lyon 1 (Malouda 22) Att: 15,500

Strasbourg 2 (Bassila 54, 88)
Lille 2 (Manchev 35, Baciu 89) Att: 11,000

Sunday, November 30

Bordeaux 1 (Deivid 4)
Bastia 1 (Hadji 90) Att: 20,000

Lens 2 (Utaka 31, Moreira 57)
Guingamp 1 (Dagano 87) Att: 33,000

Marseille 0
Paris SG 1 (Fiorese 89) Att: 58,000

Sochaux 3 (Frau 5, Santos 17, 44)
Auxerre 2 (Cisse 70, 75) Att: 18,000

Wednesday, December 3

Auxerre 1 (Fischer og 18)
Le Mans 0 Att: 6,000

Bastia 3 (Maurice pen 35, Cauet 61, Hadji 81)
Rennes 2 (Ouaddou 9, Piquionne 59) Att: 4,746

Guingamp 2 (Yahia 65, Andre 72)
Ajaccio 0 Att: 15,314

Lille 2 (Brunel 42, Tapia 90)
Nantes 0 Att: 12,373

Paris SG 3 (Boskovic 21, Reinaldo 62, Pauleta 69)
Strasbourg 2 (Ljuboja 14, Fahmi 80) Att: 32,710

Toulouse 1 (Ndoye 78)
Lens 2 (Moreira 57, Diane 59) Att: 13,660

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Monaco	15	11	3	1	28	12	36
Lyon	15	9	3	3	29	12	30
Paris SG	16	9	3	4	21	13	30
Lens	16	9	1	6	16	21	28
Marseille	15	9	0	6	22	15	27
Sochaux	15	8	3	4	22	16	27
Auxerre	16	8	2	6	26	16	26
Nantes	16	7	1	8	16	16	22
Nice	15	5	7	3	13	13	22
Bastia	16	6	4	6	21	24	22
Montpellier	15	6	3	6	22	22	21
Strasbourg	16	5	5	6	22	21	20
Bordeaux	15	5	5	5	13	13	20
Rennes	16	4	6	6	17	17	18
Lille	16	4	6	6	17	21	18
Ajaccio	16	4	4	8	14	22	16
Metz	15	4	3	8	12	16	15
Guingamp	16	4	2	10	15	25	14
Le Mans	16	2	5	9	12	27	11
Toulouse	16	2	4	10	11	27	10

LEADING GOALSCORERS
12 Djibril Cisse (Auxerre)
9 Vladimir Manchev (Lille)

GERMANY

Saturday, November 8

Bochum 4 (Hashemian 7, Madsen 15, Kalla 45, Stevic 87)
Koln 0 Att: 30,777

Eintracht Frankfurt 0
Stuttgart 2 (Szabics 8, Kuranyi 69) Att: 26,000

Freiburg 3 (Iashvili 31, 33, 76)
Wolfsburg 2 (Topic 62, Franz 90) Att: 23,500

Hamburg 3 (Romeo 53, 75, Mahdavikia pen 77)
1860 Munich 1 (Schwarz 57) Att: 44,947

Hannover 1 (Stajner 55)
Werder Bremen 5 (Hadeo Valdez 8, 37, Klasnic 41, 79, Ernst 87) Att: 25,895

Hansa Rostock 4 (Rydlewicz 15, Di Salvo 22, 33, Max 79)
Kaiserslautern 0 Att: 14,600

Hertha 2 (Lapaczinski 15, Madlung 86)
Monchengladbach 1 (Sverkos 7) Att: 32,983

Sunday, November 9

Bayer Leverkusen 3 (Berbatov 3, Lucio 25, Bierofka 57)
Schalke 1 (Hanke 13) Att: 22,500

Bayern Munich 4 (Ballack 27, Sagnol 50, Salihamidzic 72, Pizarro 90)
Borussia Dortmund 1 (Koller 49) Att: 63,000

Saturday, November 22

Borussia Dortmund 2 (Gambino 29, 32)
Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Neuville 35, Babic 78) Att: 81,500

Koln 0
Hamburg 1 (Barbarez 41) Att: 38,600

1860 Munich 0
Bayern Munich 1 (Makaay 34) Att: 69,000

Schalke 0
Hansa Rostock 1 (Tjikuzu 53) Att: 61,266

Stuttgart 3 (Szabics 30, Meissner 78, 90)
Hannover 1 (Brdaric 82) Att: 36,000

Werder Bremen 3 (Ailton 6, 14, pen 50)
Bochum 1 (Fahrenhorst 76) Att: 34,298

Wolfsburg 1 (Schnoor 32)
Monchengladbach 3 (Van Hout 13, Van Lent 68, Kolkka 77) Att: 22,137

Sunday, November 23

Freiburg 1 (Sanou 82)
Eintracht Frankfurt 0 Att: 24,000

Kaiserslautern 4 (Klose 47, 69, 79, Tchato 77)
Hertha 2 (Rafael 37, Knavs og 45) Att: 34,000

Saturday, November 29

Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Ponte 60, Lucio 78)
1860 Munich 2 (Schwarz 36, Schroth 56) Att: 22,500

Bayern Munich 2 (Pizarro 42, 49)
Koln 2 (Voronin 35, Voigt 59) Att: 48,000

Bochum 0
Stuttgart 0 Att: 30,088

Eintracht Frankfurt 3 (Preuss 32, Skela pen 56, Beierle 73)
Wolfsburg 2 (Karhan 13, Klimowicz 25) Att: 15,000

Hamburg 1 (Rahn 50)
Werder Bremen 1 (Ernst 27) Att: 55,500

Hannover 3 (Brdaric 43, Stendel 66, Christiansen 85)
Freiburg 0 Att: 20,307

Monchengladbach 2 (Carnell 46, Van Lent 69)
Kaiserslautern 1 (Lincoln 23) Att: 30,850

Sunday, November 30

Hansa Rostock 2 (Max 54, 87)
Borussia Dortmund 1 (Ewerthon 66) Att: 23,000

Hertha 1 (Lapaczinski 37)
Schalke 3 (Oude Kamphuis 59, Waldoch 68, Asamoah 81) Att: 35,000

GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Stuttgart	14	10	4	0	22	3	34
Werder Bremen	14	10	2	2	38	18	32
B Leverkusen	14	9	4	1	30	12	31
Bayern Munich	14	8	4	2	32	18	28
B Dortmund	14	7	2	5	26	21	23
Bochum	14	6	4	4	25	16	22
Wolfsburg	14	6	0	8	28	29	18
1860 Munich	14	5	3	6	15	19	18
Hannover	14	5	3	6	25	31	18
Freiburg	14	5	3	6	19	25	18
Schalke	14	4	5	5	18	21	17
Hamburg	14	4	4	6	16	26	16
Hansa Rostock	14	4	3	7	19	22	15
Kaiserslautern*	14	5	2	7	18	24	14
M'gladbach	14	3	4	7	13	20	13
Eintracht F'furt	14	3	2	9	12	22	11
Hertha	14	2	5	7	13	28	11
Koln	14	2	2	10	11	25	8

**3pts deducted for failing to supply accurate information when re-applying for professional licence*

LEADING GOALSCORERS
13 Ailton (Werder Bremen)
10 Martin Max (Hansa Rostock)
9 Diego Klimowicz (Wolfsburg)
9 Miroslav Klose (Kaiserslautern)

GREECE

Nov 8: Proodeftiki 1 Kallithea 1.
Nov 9: Xanthi 1 Aigaleo 2; Panionios 0 Halkidona 0; Paniliakos 1 OFI 1; Iraklis 1 Olympiakos 3; Ionikos 0 PAOK 1; Panathinaikos 1 Aris 0; Akratitos 2 AEK 7.
Nov 22: Olympiakos 1 Panathinaikos 1; AEK 3 Proodeftiki 0.
Nov 23: Aigaleo 2 Halkidona 1; OFI 1 Xanthi 2; Aris 2 Panionios 1; Kallithea 2 Paniliakos 2; PAOK 2 Iraklis 0; Ionikos 4 Akratitos 1.
Nov 29: OFI 1 Aigaleo 1.
Nov 30: Halkidona 2 Aris 1; Xanthi 1 Kallithea 1; Panionios 1 Olympiakos 2; Paniliakos 1 AEK 0; Proodeftiki 1 Ionikos 1; Iraklis 2 Akratitos 1; Panathinaikos 3 PAOK 0.

GREECE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olympiakos	12	9	2	1	28	8	29
Panathinaikos	12	8	3	1	21	7	27
Aigaleo	12	7	3	2	14	7	24
PAOK	12	7	2	3	18	12	23
AEK	12	6	3	3	26	14	21
Halkidona	12	4	5	3	15	15	17
Panionios	12	3	6	3	14	15	15
OFI	12	4	3	5	13	21	15
Paniliakos	12	3	5	4	17	17	14
Iraklis	12	3	4	5	13	15	13
Xanthi	12	3	4	5	13	16	13
Aris	12	3	3	6	12	16	12
Kallithea	12	1	7	4	18	20	10
Ionikos	12	2	3	7	13	21	9
Proodeftiki	12	1	6	5	7	17	9
Akratitos	12	1	3	8	11	32	6

HOLLAND

Friday, November 7

Vitesse 2 (Mbamba 7, Van Beukering pen 56)
Willem II 2 (Quinn pen 10, Caluwe 24) Att: 15,000

Saturday, November 8

Heerenveen 1 (Sibon 61)
Zwolle 1 (Zuurman 90) Att: 12,500

NAC 1 (Boussaboun 39)
AZ 2 (Huysegems 41, Perez 61) Att: 13,169

PSV 1 (Molenaar og 5)
RBC 1 (Thompson 75) Att: 33,000

Roda JC 2 (Senden 25, Anastasiou 88)
Twente 1 (Van der Weerden 16) Att: 12,524

Sunday, November 9

Den Haag 1 (Stroeve 17)
Ajax 4 (Heitinga 33, Sneijder 47, Ibrahimovic 62, Sikora 80) Att: 9,420

NEC 2 (Demouge 27, Hersi 31)
Groningen 3 (Van Gessel 46, Pinas 49, Van der Linden 59) Att: 12,250

Utrecht 1 (Van de Haar 69)
RKC 0 Att: 17,000

Volendam 1 (Ouhsaine Ouichou 7)
Feyenoord 3 (Kuijt pen 4, 86, Van Persie 81) Att: 6,113

Friday, November 21

RKC 1 (Teixeira 8)
Groningen 1 (Smit 57) Att: 6,500

Saturday, November 22

AZ 1 (El Khattabi 68)
Roda JC 5 (Senden 45, Anastasiou 50, 64, Vicelich 52, Kone 77) Att: 8,275

Feyenoord 3 (Van Persie 22, Paauwe 44, Kuijt 80)
Vitesse 0 Att: 40,500

NEC 2 (Van der Doelen 5, Demouge 8)
PSV 3 (De Jong 13, Kezman 71, 72) Att: 12,500

Willem II 6 (Quinn 35, Jaliens 37, Caluwe 42, Shoukov 57, Koning og 61, Landzaat 90)
Volendam 0 Att: 12,100

Zwolle 0
NAC 2 (Boukhari 28, Vos 90) Att: 6,400

Sunday, November 23

Ajax 3 (Sneijder 36, Mitea 37, Ibrahimovic 59)
Heerenveen 1 (Sibon 18) Att: 49,331

RBC 1 (Youssouf 48)
Utrecht 1 (Van de Haar 74) Att: 5,000

Twente 4 (Niemeyer 3, N'Kufo 13, 64, Polak pen 90)
Den Haag 0 Att: 13,000

Friday, November 28

Groningen 2 (Salmon 47, Van Gessel 79)
RBC 0 Att: 12,200

Saturday, November 29

Den Haag 1 (Hofstede 29)
Vitesse 1 (Mbamba 74) Att: 6,131

Twente 2 (John 50, Christensen 86)
NAC 1 (Slot 72) Att: 13,150

Willem II 3 (Denneboom 57, Caluwe 65, Van den Eede 90)
NEC 0 Att: 12,300

Zwolle 0
PSV 4 (Schol og 23, Vogel 35, Yobo og 48, Robben 62) Att: 6,650

Sunday, November 30

Ajax 2 (Van der Vaart 4, 11)
Feyenoord 0 Att: 51,344

RKC 1 (Boulahrouz 50)
AZ 1 (Fortes Rodriguez 90) Att: 6,000

Utrecht 3 (Vandenbroeck og 29, De Groot 61, Leitoe 77)
Roda JC 1 (Cristiano 69) Att: 16,500

Wednesday, December 3

AZ 2 (El Khattabi 17, 82)
Groningen 1 (Salmon 83) Att: 7,329

Heerenveen 2 (Sibon 32, Samaras 80)
Den Haag 0 Att: 14,200

Volendam 2 (Esajas 12, 74)
Twente 0 Att: 4,574

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ajax	13	11	1	1	38	14	34
PSV	13	9	3	1	34	12	30
AZ	14	9	2	3	28	16	29
Feyenoord	13	7	3	3	24	16	24
Willem II	13	6	3	4	23	21	21
Roda JC	13	5	5	3	23	15	20
Twente	14	6	1	7	25	26	19
Utrecht	13	5	4	4	16	17	19
Heerenveen	13	6	1	6	14	15	19
Groningen	14	5	4	5	20	22	19
RBC	13	4	5	4	12	14	17
RKC	13	4	3	6	17	18	15
NAC	13	4	2	7	18	18	14
Volendam	13	3	4	6	17	28	13
NEC	13	4	0	9	15	26	12
Den Haag	14	2	4	8	11	30	10
Vitesse	13	1	6	6	18	26	9
Zwolle	13	1	3	9	6	25	6

LEADING GOALSCORERS
11 Mateja Kezman (PSV)
10 Ali El Khattabi (AZ)
8 Zlatan Ibrahimovic (Ajax)

HUNGARY

Nov 8: Bekescsaba 1 Pecs 0; Balaton 1 Gyor 0; Matav 1 Ujpest 1; Videoton 1 Ferencvaros 2; MTK 2 Zalaegerszeg 0.
Nov 9: Haladas 0 Debrecen 0.
Nov 14: Gyor 2 Videoton 2.
Nov 15: Haladas 0 Balaton 4; Ferencvaros 2 Bekescsaba 0; Pecs 1 MTK 1; Zalaegerszeg 2 Ujpest 3; Matav 1 Debrecen 3.
Nov 22: Bekescsaba 2 Gyor 0; Ujpest 1 Pecs 1; Matav 2 Zalaegerszeg 1; Videoton 1 Haladas 2; MTK 1 Ferencvaros 1; Debrecen 0 Balaton 1.
Nov 28: Balaton 1 Videoton 0.
Nov 29: Ferencvaros 2 Ujpest 1; Gyor 1 MTK 1; Haladas 1 Bekescsaba 1; Pecs 2 Matav 0.
Nov 30: Zalaegerszeg 0 Debrecen 1.

ESM
EUROPEAN SPORTS MAGAZINES

GOLDEN SHOE

ESM GOLDEN SHOE STANDINGS AT 30.11.03

pos	name	team	goals	factor	pts
1	Ara Hakopian	Banants (Arm)	45	1	45
2	Tor Henning Hamre	Flora Tallinn (Est)	39	1	39
3	Viktors Dobrecovs	Metalurgs Liepaja (Lat)	36	1	36
4	Ailton	Werder Bremen (Ger)	13	2	26
	Girts Karlsons	Metalurgs Liepaja (Lat)	26	1	26
6	Harald Brattbakk	Rosenborg (Nor)	17	1.5	25.5
	Roland Kollmann	Grazer AK (Aut)	17	1.5	25.5
8	Djibril Cisse	Auxerre (Fra)	12	2	24
	Alan Shearer	Newcastle (Eng)	12	2	24
	Andrii Shevchenko	Milan (Ita)	12	2	24
11	Frode Johnsen	Rosenborg (Nor)	15	1.5	22.5
12	Andrei Krolov	Tallinna VMK (Est)	22	1	22
	Niclas Skoog	Malmo (Swe)	22	1	22
	Maris Verpakovskis	Skonto Riga (Lat)	22	1	22
15	Henrik Larsson	Celtic (Sco)	14	1.5	21
	Dmitri Loskov	Lokomotiv Moscow (Rus)	14	1.5	21
	Sigurd Rushfeldt	Austria Wien (Aut)	14	1.5	21
	Ingemar Teever	Tallinna VMK (Est)	21	1	21

For the latest standings, updated weekly, visit www.worldsoccer.com

HUNGARY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Balaton	16	10	2	4	19	7	32
Ferencvaros*	16	9	5	2	23	15	32
MTK	16	7	6	3	25	15	27
Debrecen	16	8	3	5	24	14	27
Pecs	16	6	5	5	17	16	23
Videoton	16	5	6	5	22	22	21
Matav	15	6	3	6	19	20	21
Ujpest	16	4	8	4	20	19	20
Gyor	16	4	4	8	17	21	16
Haladas	16	3	7	6	11	26	16
Bekescsaba	15	3	4	8	13	21	13
Zalaegerszeg	16	3	1	12	18	32	10

**6pt deduction revoked*

ITALY

Saturday, November 8

Brescia 0
Bologna 0 Att: 10,087

Sampdoria 2 (Bazzani 22, Doni 27)
Empoli 0 Att: 23,067

Sunday, November 9

Inter 3 (Cruz 26, Materazzi 50, Vieri 80)
Ancona 0 Att: 54,509

Juventus 4 (Di Vaio 79, 89, Miccoli 85, Trezeguet 90)
Udinese 1 (Jankulovski pen 66) Att: 34,254

Parma 0
Milan 0 Att: 23,663

Perugia 2 (Margiotta 45, Grosso 82)
Lecce 2 (Chevanton 7, Ledesma 56) Att: 12,743

Reggina 1 (Dall'Aqua 31)
Modena 1 (Campedelli 45) Att: 20,154

Roma 2 (Mancini 81, Emerson 86)
Lazio 0 Att: 70,000

Siena 1 (Chiesa pen 76)
Chievo 2 (Pellissier 28, 47) Att: 16,414

Saturday, November 22

Inter 6 (Cannavaro 34, Martins 42, Van der Meyde 50, Farinos 60, Cruz 67, Vieri 75)
Reggina 0 Att: 45,950

Modena 0
Juventus 2 (Trezeguet 42, Nedved 50) Att: 18,748

Sunday, November 23

Ancona 1 (Berretta 60)
Brescia 1 (Baggio 5) Att: 11,803

Bologna 0
Roma 4 (Totti 16, Montella 33, Panucci 38, Cassano 49) Att: 27,495

Chievo 0
Milan 2 (Shevchenko 45, 50) Att: 30,186

Empoli 1 (Foggia 90)
Parma 0 Att: 5,663

Lazio 3 (Stankovic 45, Corradi 87, Inzaghi 90)
Perugia 1 (Grosso 62) Att: 44,937

Lecce 0
Sampdoria 0 Att: 13,760

Udinese 1 (Fava 42)
Siena 1 (Flo 79) Att: 23,453

Saturday, November 29

Juventus 1 (Montero 90)
Inter 3 (Cruz 12, 68, Martins 77) Att: 43,417

Siena 3 (Taddei 41, 43, Menegazzo 90)
Lazio 0 Att: 13,022

Sunday, November 30

Brescia 1 (Caracciolo 64)
Udinese 2 (Jorgensen 46, Fava 55) Att: 11,735

Milan 2 (Shevchenko 22, 64)
Modena 0 Att: 59,580

Parma 3 (Morfeo 48, Marchionni 66, Gilardino pen 76)
Chievo 1 (Pellissier 69) Att: 12,844

Perugia 1 (Vryzas 40)
Empoli 1 (Rocchi 3) Att: 18,220

Reggina 0
Bologna 0 Att: 10,503

Roma 3 (Mancini 19, Carew 45, Totti 77)
Lecce 1 (Chevanton 89) Att: 51,591

Sampdoria 2 (Bazzani 67, Flachi 89)
Ancona 0 Att: 22,259

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Roma	11	8	3	0	25	4	27
Milan	11	8	3	0	20	4	27
Juventus	11	8	2	1	26	12	26
Inter	11	6	4	1	20	6	22
Parma	11	6	3	2	19	11	21
Lazio	11	6	1	4	18	16	19
Sampdoria	11	4	4	3	11	10	16
Udinese	11	4	3	4	15	15	15
Siena	11	3	5	3	15	10	14
Chievo	11	4	2	5	13	15	14
Modena	11	4	2	5	10	12	14
Reggina	11	1	7	3	10	19	10
Brescia	11	1	5	5	16	23	8
Lecce	11	2	2	7	12	24	8
Bologna	11	1	4	6	9	17	7
Perugia	11	0	7	4	13	22	7
Empoli	11	1	3	7	7	23	6
Ancona	11	0	4	7	5	21	4

LEADING GOALSCORERS
12 Andrii Shevchenko (Milan)
7 Adriano (Parma)
7 Marco Di Vaio (Juventus)
7 Dino Fava (Udinese)
7 David Trezeguet (Juventus)

KAZAKHSTAN

KAZAKHSTAN – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Irtysh	32	25	3	4	59	20	78
Tobol	32	24	4	4	55	19	76
Zhenis	32	20	4	8	65	33	64
Atyrau	32	16	5	11	48	42	53
Aktobe-Lento	32	13	12	7	40	29	51
Ordabasy	32	15	4	13	33	29	49
Kairat	32	14	7	11	51	42	49
Zhetysu	32	14	6	12	46	38	48
Yelimai	32	12	7	13	35	35	43
Shakhtyor	32	10	12	10	37	29	42
Yesil-Bogatyr	32	10	6	16	42	53	36
Taraz	32	10	4	18	35	45	34
Kaisar	32	9	7	16	26	42	34
Vostok	32	8	8	16	34	46	32
Ekibastuzetc	32	8	4	20	30	56	28
Batys	32	8	2	22	25	74	26
Yesil Kokshetau*	32	4	9	19	13	42	15

Kaspi Aktau withdrew before start of season
**6pts deducted for non-payment of fines and transfer fees*

KAZAKH CUP – Final

Nov 11 - Central stadium, Almaty
Kairat 3 (Tlehugov pen 7, pen 28, 53)
Tobol 1 (Kosolapov pen 20)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 8,000. **Ref:** Holmatov

LATVIA

LATVIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Skonto Riga	28	23	4	1	91	9	73
Metalurgs	28	22	2	4	100	29	68
Ventspils	28	19	4	5	89	18	61
Dinaburg	28	13	5	10	43	36	44
FK Riga	28	8	5	15	34	63	29
Valmiera	28	6	5	17	27	70	23
Auda	28	4	1	23	21	88	13
RKB-Arma Riga	28	2	4	22	23	115	10

NORWAY

NORWEGIAN CUP – Final

Nov 9 - Ullevaal stadium, Oslo
Rosenborg 3 (F Johnsen 35, Solli 105, 120)
Bodo/Glimt 1 (Johansen 28)
Aet. **HT:** 1-1. **90mins:** 1-1. **Att:** 25,447. **Ref:** Hauge

POLAND

Nov 7: Widzew 0 Legia 1.
Nov 8: Katowice 2 Wisla P 0; Odra 2 Amica 2; Gornik L 0 Gornik Z 2; Lech 1 Gornik P 0.
Nov 9: Swit 0 Groclin 4; Polonia 2 Wisla K 5.
Nov 15: Polonia 1 Swit 0.
Nov 22: Gornik P 1 Swit 0; Wisla K 4 Lech 2; Gornik Z 1 Polonia 0; Wisla P 2 Odra 0; Legia 1 Katowice 0; Groclin 2 Widzew 0.
Nov 23: Amica 3 Gornik L 2.

POLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wisla K	13	10	0	3	38	17	30
Amica	13	9	2	2	24	13	29
Legia	13	7	5	1	20	10	26
Groclin	13	6	4	3	28	12	22
Gornik L	13	7	1	5	16	19	22
Gornik Z	13	5	5	3	16	13	20
Wisla P	13	6	2	5	21	21	20
Katowice	13	5	3	5	11	21	18
Odra	13	4	4	5	17	22	16
Lech	13	4	2	7	23	21	14
Polonia	13	2	5	6	10	17	11
Widzew	13	2	4	7	16	24	10
Gornik P	13	2	3	8	8	19	9
Swit	13	0	4	9	7	26	4

PORTUGAL

Friday, November 7

Gil Vicente 0
Belenenses 0

Saturday, November 8

Boavista 2 (Ricardo Sousa 69, Paulo Turra 71)
Nacional 1 (Paulo Sergio 90)

Maritimo 0
Academica 2 (Delmer 20, Fabio Felicio 83)

Sporting Braga 2 (Pena 8, Igor 53)
Estrela Amadora 1 (Semedo 60)

Sunday, November 9

Alverca 0
Benfica 3 (Tiago 13, 82, Geovanni 74)

Beira Mar 2 (Wijnhard 50, 60)
Guimaraes 2 (Joao Tomas 74, Guga 90)

Moreirense 1 (Manoel 28)
FC Porto 1 (McCarthy 23)

Rio Ave 3 (Evandro 43, 88, Van Es 72)
Uniao Leiria 0

Monday, November 10

Pacos Ferreira 1 (Ze Manuel 51)
Sporting Lisbon 2 (Pedro Barbosa 18, pen 70)

Wednesday, November 12

Maritimo 1 (Dinda 64)
Benfica 1 (Simao 82)

Friday, November 28

Estrela Amadora 2 (Julio Cesar 6, Sabry 69)
Boavista 1 (Ricardo Sousa 56)

Saturday, November 29

Belenenses 2 (Antchouet 1, Pele 90)
Maritimo 2 (Van der Gaag 24, Briguel 27)

Sunday, November 30

Academica 0
Beira Mar 1 (Juninho Petrolina 61)

Guimaraes 2 (Joao Tomas 14, Nuno Assis 19)
Alverca 2 (Rodolfo Lima 3, 87)

Nacional 3 (Alexandre Goulart 19, Adriano 31, Serginho Baiano 68)
Moreirense 1 (Lima 14)

FC Porto 4 (Maniche 37, McCarthy 58, Alenichev 64, Derlei 80)
Gil Vicente 1 (Edinho 65)

Uniao Leiria 1 (Bilro 81)
Pacos Ferreira 0

Monday, December 1

Benfica 2 (Simao pen 40, Cristiano 69)
Rio Ave 0

Sporting Lisbon 2 (Joao Pinto 29, Silva 61)
Sporting Braga 0

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Porto	12	10	2	0	29	8	32
Sporting Lisbon	12	8	1	3	21	14	25
Benfica	12	7	3	2	22	11	24
Beira Mar	12	7	2	3	21	13	23
Sporting Braga	12	6	3	3	12	11	21
Boavista	12	5	5	2	13	7	20
Maritimo	12	5	5	2	13	11	20
Nacional	12	6	0	6	19	12	18
Belenenses	12	3	6	3	17	19	15
Alverca	12	4	2	6	14	14	14
Academica	12	4	2	6	12	15	14
Uniao Leiria	12	4	2	6	13	20	14
Rio Ave	12	3	4	5	13	13	13
Gil Vicente	12	3	3	6	15	15	12
Moreirense	12	3	3	6	9	18	12
Guimaraes	12	2	4	6	14	19	10
Estrela Amadora	12	2	1	9	8	29	7
Pacos Ferreira	12	2	0	10	5	21	6

LEADING GOALSCORERS
10 Derlei (FC Porto)
7 Adriano (Nacional)
7 Ricardo Sousa (Boavista)
7 Rodolfo Lima (Alverca)
7 Simao Sabrosa (Benfica)

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shelbourne	36	19	12	5	52	28	69
Bohemians	36	18	10	8	58	37	64
Cork	36	13	14	9	43	33	53
Longford	36	12	12	12	46	44	48
St Patrick's	36	10	16	10	48	48	46
Waterford	36	11	12	13	44	58	45
Shamrock Rvrs	36	10	14	12	45	46	44
Drogheda	36	9	10	17	38	50	37
Derry	36	7	15	14	33	51	36
UCD	36	7	13	16	27	39	34

ROMANIA

Nov 7: National 2 Gloria 0.
Nov 8: Poli AEK 1 Rapid 0; Apulum 0 Brasov 1; Arges 0 U Craiova 1; Oradea 3 Bacau 0.
Nov 9: Ceahlaul 2 Farul 1; Steaua 2 Otelul 0; Petrolul 0 Dinamo 1.
Nov 21: U Craiova 4 Oradea 1; Bacau 0 Steaua 0.
Nov 22: Gloria 1 Petrolul 3; Brasov 0 Ceahlaul 0; Dinamo 4 Poli AEK 2; Otelul 1 National 1.
Nov 23: Rapid 2 Apulum 2; Farul 1 Arges 0.
Nov 28: Poli AEK 2 Petrolul 1; Arges 2 Brasov 0; Otelul 1 Gloria 0.
Nov 29: Oradea 5 Farul 1; National 2 Bacau 1.
Nov 30: Apulum 0 Dinamo 1; Ceahlaul 1 Rapid 2; Steaua 2 U Craiova 0.
Dec 3: Steaua 2 Oradea 1.

ROMANIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Steaua	14	9	5	0	22	4	32
Dinamo	14	9	2	3	31	19	29
Rapid	14	7	5	2	24	15	26
U Craiova	14	5	5	4	17	15	20
Otelul	14	5	5	4	13	12	20
National	14	5	4	5	18	19	19
Poli AEK	14	4	7	3	13	14	19
Apulum	14	5	4	5	14	21	19
Arges	14	4	4	6	17	15	16
Farul	14	4	4	6	19	22	16
Oradea	14	4	3	7	20	19	15
Ceahlaul	14	4	3	7	16	21	15
Brasov	14	4	3	7	18	26	15
Gloria	14	4	3	7	17	25	15
Bacau	14	3	5	6	17	27	14
Petrolul	14	3	4	7	16	18	13

SCOTLAND

Saturday, November 8

Celtic 5 (Hartson 23, 77, Wallace 81, Varga 83, Larsson 87)
Dunfermline 0 Att: 58,328

Dundee 0
Motherwell 1 (Craig 52) Att: 6,374

Hibernian 2 (Brown 15, McCracken og 90)
Dundee Utd 2 (McLaren 28, Robson 83) Att: 8,756

Livingston 2 (Lilley pen 26, Makel 45)
Partick 0 Att: 5,226

Sunday, November 9

Aberdeen 0
Hearts 1 (Tosh og 12) Att: 9,687

Kilmarnock 2 (McDonald 39, Canero 50)
Rangers 3 (Arveladze 30, 63, Capucho 87) Att: 12,204

Saturday, November 22

Dundee Utd 1 (McIntyre 76)
Celtic 5 (Sutton 34, 56, pen 82, Larsson 52, 58) Att: 10,802

Dunfermline 2 (Crawford 52, 64)
Dundee 0 Att: 5,490

Motherwell 1 (Clarkson 28)
Livingston 1 (Lilley 39) Att: 6,357

Partick 1 (Grady 81)
Kilmarnock 4 (Nish 26, 90, McDonald 61, 66) Att: 4,445

Rangers 3 (Hughes 77, Lovenkrands 89, 90)
Aberdeen 0 Att: 49,962

Sunday, November 23

Hearts 2 (Orman og 9, G Smith og 67)
Hibernian 0 Att: 16,632

Tuesday, November 25

Motherwell 2 (Pearson 70, Corrigan 90)
Dunfermline 2 (Crawford 15, Brewster 39) Att: 4,220

Saturday, November 29

Celtic 3 (Larsson 23, Sutton 36, 60)
Partick 1 (Grady 12) Att: 58,202

Dunfermline 2 (Derek Young 61, Bullen 74)
Aberdeen 2 (Deloumeaux 25, Booth 60) Att: 5,294

Kilmarnock 2 (Canero 13, Boyd 60)
Motherwell 0 Att: 6,320

Livingston 1 (Lilley pen 71)
Dundee 1 (Fotheringham 84) Att: 4,625

Sunday, November 30

Dundee Utd 2 (Archibald 12, McInness 44)
Hearts 1 (Severin 47) Att: 6,343

Hibernian 0
Rangers 1 (Hughes 90) Att: 11,160

SCOTLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Celtic	14	13	1	0	46	5	40
Rangers	14	11	2	1	37	11	35
Hearts	14	8	2	4	22	17	26
Motherwell	14	5	5	4	17	17	20
Dunfermline	14	5	5	4	16	19	20
Livingston	14	4	6	4	15	15	18
Dundee	14	4	5	5	15	16	17
Kilmarnock	14	5	2	7	20	30	17
Hibernian	14	4	4	6	14	20	16
Dundee Utd	14	3	4	7	12	27	13
Aberdeen	14	2	2	10	11	29	8
Partick	14	0	2	12	12	31	2

LEADING GOALSCORER
14 Henrik Larsson (Celtic)

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

Nov 8: Radnicki O 0 Obilic 0; Red Star 3 Partizan 0; Sartid 3 Kom Podgorica 0; Napredak 3 Vojvodina 4; Buducnost 0 Zeleznik 2; Zeta 2 OFK 1; Hajduk K 1 Sutjeska 0; Zemun 2 Borac 1.
Nov 21: Partizan 3 Radnicki O 1.
Nov 22: Kom Podgorica 0 Zeleznik 2; Vojvodina 0 Hajduk K 0; Sartid 3 Napredak 2; Borac 2 Buducnost 0; Sutjeska 2 Zeta 0.
Nov 23: OFK 1 Red Star 0; Obilic 3 Zemun 0.
Nov 29: Napredak 0 Kom Podgorica 1; Buducnost 0 Obilic 2; Zeta 1 Vojvodina 0; Hajduk K 0 Sartid 2; Radnicki O 1 OFK 1; Zeleznik 2 Borac 0.
Nov 30: Red Star 1 Sutjeska 0; Zemun 1 Partizan 2.

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Red Star	13	10	1	2	28	6	31
Sartid	13	10	1	2	31	17	31
Partizan	13	9	1	3	29	15	28
Zeleznik	13	9	1	3	22	8	28
OFK	13	7	3	3	18	14	24
Obilic	13	6	2	5	18	14	20
Hajduk K	13	5	3	5	10	9	18
Buducnost	13	6	0	7	18	23	18
Sutjeska	13	5	1	7	15	16	16
Zemun	13	4	3	6	12	15	15
Zeta	13	4	3	6	13	19	15
Vojvodina	13	3	5	5	13	17	14
Napredak	13	2	3	8	13	21	9
Radnicki O	13	1	6	6	9	20	9
Borac	13	2	3	8	12	28	9
Kom Podgorica	13	3	0	10	10	29	9

SPAIN

Saturday, November 8

Athletic Bilbao 1 (Iraola 14)
Espanyol 0 Att: 28,000

Deportivo La Coruna 2 (Jauregi og 72, og 88)
Real Sociedad 1 (Nihat 29) Att: 25,000

Zaragoza 1 (Ponzio 7)
Celta Vigo 1 (Jose Ignacio 4) Att: 28,000

Sunday, November 9

Albacete 0
Malaga 1 (Salva 62) Att: 15,000

Atletico Madrid 1 (Novo 55)
Villarreal 0 Att: 55,000

Barcelona 2 (Kluivert 43, Marquez 83)
Betis 1 (Fernando 53) Att: 70,487

Mallorca 4 (Colsa 8, Correa 39, 45, Eto'o 69)
Murcia 1 (Karanka 30) Att: 12,000

Osasuna 1 (Valdo 45)
Valladolid 1 (Fernando Sales 29) Att: 14,584

Sevilla 4 (Ivan Helguera og 7, Dario Silva 9, Daniel Alves 14, Javi Casquero 37)
Real Madrid 1 (Ronaldo 53) Att: 45,000

Valencia 1 (Baraja 25)
Racing Santander 2 (Bodipo 22, 49) Att: 49,000

Saturday, November 22

Betis 0
Deportivo La Coruna 0 Att: 30,000

Real Sociedad 0
Mallorca 1 (Eto'o 17) Att: 26,000

Villarreal 2 (Jose Mari 40, Anderson 90)
Barcelona 1 (Kluivert 72) Att: 20,000

Sunday, November 23

Celta Vigo 0
Athletic Bilbao 2 (Lacruz 58, Iraola 90) Att: 18,000

Espanyol 1 (Domoraud 90)
Sevilla 0 Att: 17,100

Malaga 0
Osasuna 0 Att: 21,000

Murcia 2 (Richi 37, Michel 47)
Valencia 2 (Mista 12, 54) Att: 18,000

Racing Santander 1 (Rebosio og 39)
Zaragoza 2 (Alvaro 45, Soriano 85) Att: 13,325

Real Madrid 2 (Beckham 38, Zidane 83)
Albacete 1 (Parri 39) Att: 80,000

Valladolid 3 (Makukula 21, Zapata 37, Sousa 65)
Atletico Madrid 1 (Musampa 14) Att: 15,000

Saturday, November 29

Atletico Madrid 2 (De los Santos 6, Nikolaidis 70)
Malaga 0 Att: 35,000

Murcia 2 (Luis Garcia 47, Karanka 68)
Real Sociedad 2 (Gabilondo 29, De Paula 48) Att: 9,000

Osasuna 1 (Bakayoko 11)
Real Madrid 1 (Ronaldo 74) Att: 15,984

Valencia 3 (Jorge Lopez 19, Vicente 26, Aimar 44)
Zaragoza 2 (Villa 48, Cani 78) Att: 45,000

Sunday, November 30

Albacete 2 (Aranda pen 44, 67)
Espanyol 1 (Tamudo 14) Att: 15,000

Athletic Bilbao 1 (Jonan 7)
Racing Santander 2 (Bodipo 42, Regueiro 66) Att: 30,000

Barcelona 0
Valladolid 0 Att: 55,958

Deportivo La Coruna 0
Villarreal 1 (Roger 87) Att: 25,000

Mallorca 2 (Campano 25, 83)
Betis 1 (Nino og 37) Att: 14,000

Sevilla 0
Celta Vigo 1 (Jesuli 34) Att: 35,000

Tuesday, December 2

Real Sociedad 0
Valencia 0 Att: 21,496

Wednesday, December 3

Betis 1 (Ismael 47)
Murcia 1 (Luis Garcia pen 90) Att: 18,000

Celta Vigo 2 (Jose Ignacio 19, Contreras 59)
Albacete 2 (Pacheco 45, Aranda 51) Att: 15,000

Espanyol 0
Osasuna 1 (Webo 86) Att: 11,000

Malaga 5 (Salva 8, 13, 68, Diego Alonso 74, Canabal 86)
Barcelona 1 (Fernando Sanz og 78) Att: 21,000

Real Madrid 2 (Ronaldo 1, Raul 20)
Atletico Madrid 0 Att: 80,000

Valladolid 1 (Oscar 64)
Deportivo La Coruna 1 (Jonathan og 49) Att: 12,000

Villarreal 0
Mallorca 2 (Eto'o 54, Campano 59) Att: 10,000

Thursday, December 4

Racing Santander 0
Sevilla 4 (Baptista 12, 45, Dario Silva 22, Reyes 46) Att: 11,086

Zaragoza 2 (Villa 25, 46)
Athletic Bilbao 2 (Yeste 12, Tiko 23) Att: 28,000

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Madrid	14	9	3	2	29	15	30
Valencia	14	8	4	2	27	11	28
Dep La Coruna	14	8	3	3	22	11	27
Osasuna	14	6	5	3	15	10	23
Atletico Madrid	14	7	1	6	17	18	22
Athletic Bilbao	14	6	3	5	18	16	21
Malaga	14	6	2	6	18	17	20
Barcelona	14	5	5	4	18	18	20
Racing Santander	14	6	2	6	18	19	20
Villarreal	14	5	5	4	14	15	20
Valladolid	14	5	5	4	19	21	20
Mallorca	14	6	2	6	18	22	20
Sevilla	14	4	6	4	20	16	18
Zaragoza	14	4	4	6	15	17	16
Celta Vigo	14	3	6	5	17	19	15
Betis	14	3	6	5	16	18	15
Real Sociedad	14	3	6	5	15	19	15
Albacete	14	4	1	9	15	21	13
Murcia	14	1	7	6	13	25	10
Espanyol	14	2	2	10	10	26	8

LEADING GOALSCORERS
11 Ronaldo (Real Madrid)
8 Mista (Valencia)
8 Salva (Malaga)
7 Samuel Eto'o (Mallorca)
7 Fernando Torres (Atletico Madrid)

SWEDEN

SWEDISH CUP – Final

Nov 1 - Rasunda stadium, Stockholm
Elfsborg 2 (Nilsson 4, 67)
Assyriska 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 10,280. **Ref:** Ukalovic

SWITZERLAND

Nov 23: Basle 5 Grasshopper 2; Wil 1900 2 St Gallen 0; Neuchatel Xamax 0 Thun 1; Young Boys 3 Servette 0; Zurich 4 Aarau 2.
Nov 30: Aarau 1 Wil 1900 1; Grasshopper 3 Young Boys 3; Servette 1 Neuchatel Xamax 0; St Gallen 1 Basle 2; Thun 2 Zurich 0.

SWITZERLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Basle	18	17	1	0	56	16	52
Young Boys	18	12	2	4	39	25	38
Servette	18	9	4	5	33	29	31
Aarau	18	5	7	6	29	32	22
Thun	18	5	6	7	20	32	21
St Gallen	18	5	5	8	24	32	20
Grasshopper	18	6	2	10	32	41	20
Wil 1900	18	4	5	9	23	35	17
Neuchatel X	18	4	4	10	19	27	16
Zurich	18	4	2	12	25	31	14

TURKEY

Nov 7: Trabzonspor 2 Bursaspor 0.
Nov 8: Adanaspor 1 Sebatspor 2; Konyaspor 0 Samsunspor 0; Fenerbahce 1 Rizespor 1 (to be replayed after the referee forgot to send off a Rizespor player he had booked twice).
Nov 9: Genclerbirligi 1 Besiktas 2; Diyarbakirspor 2 Malatyaspor 0; Gaziantepspor 1 Denizlispor 2; Elazigspor 1 Istanbulspor 1; Galatasaray 2 Ankaragucu 1.
Nov 22: Denizlispor 2 Galatasaray 1; Ankaragucu 2 Genclerbirligi 3; Besiktas 1 Konyaspor 1; Malatyaspor 0 Gaziantepspor 0.
Nov 23: Samsunspor 3 Fenerbahce 0; Rizespor 0 Adanaspor 2; Trabzonspor 2 Elazigspor 2; Istanbulspor 1 Diyarbakirspor 3; Bursaspor 1 Sebatspor 1.
Nov 28: Galatasaray 2 Malatyaspor 2.

Nov 29: Sebatspor 1 Rizespor 0; Diyarbakirspor 2 Trabzonspor 2; Elazigspor 1 Bursaspor 0; Konyaspor 1 Ankaragucu 1.
Nov 30: Adanaspor 2 Samsunspor 3; Gaziantepspor 2 Istanbulspor 1; Fenerbahce 2 Besiktas 2; Genclerbirligi 1 Denizlispor 3.

TURKEY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Besiktas	14	10	4	0	33	10	34
Trabzonspor	14	8	4	2	23	15	28
Galatasaray	14	8	4	2	23	16	28
Denizlispor	14	8	2	4	27	15	26
Fenerbahce	13	7	4	2	28	18	25
Malatyaspor	14	7	3	4	21	13	24
Gaziantepspor	14	7	2	5	19	16	23
Genclerbirligi	14	6	1	7	26	18	19
Istanbulspor	14	5	3	6	22	20	18
Diyarbakirspor	14	5	3	6	21	21	18
Samsunspor	14	5	3	6	22	26	18
Ankaragucu	14	4	3	7	17	24	15
Konyaspor	14	2	8	4	15	21	14
Sebatspor	14	3	3	8	15	24	12
Rizespor	13	3	3	7	9	19	12
Bursaspor	14	2	5	7	14	21	11
Elazigspor	14	2	4	8	16	35	10
Adanaspor	14	3	1	10	12	31	10

UKRAINE

Nov 9: Metalurh D 1 Shakhtar 3; Vorskla 3 Illichivets 1; Chornomorets 0 Zirka 0; Arsenal 2 Karpaty 3; Volyn 1 Obolon 1; Kryvbas 1 Borysfen 0.
Nov 10: Tavriya 0 Dynamo 0; Dnipro 0 Metalurh Z 0.

UKRAINE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shakhtar	15	12	3	0	33	10	39
Dynamo	15	11	3	1	34	10	36
Dnipro	15	9	3	3	27	12	30
Metalurh D	15	7	5	3	25	18	26
Chornomorets	15	5	8	2	19	17	23
Obolon	15	6	4	5	16	17	22
Arsenal	15	6	3	6	20	19	21
Illichivets	15	4	7	4	17	22	19
Karpaty	15	4	4	7	16	20	16
Metalurh Z	15	4	4	7	13	19	16
Borysfen	15	4	3	8	8	16	15
Kryvbas	15	3	5	7	10	18	14
Vorskla	15	3	5	7	12	21	14
Volyn	15	3	3	9	11	23	12
Tavriya	15	2	5	8	7	15	11
Zirka	15	2	5	8	7	18	11

SOUTH AMERICA

ARGENTINA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Friday, November 7

Newell's Old Boys 0
Racing Club 0

Saturday, November 8

Independiente 0
Chacarita Juniors 3 (Pena pen 31, Milla 45, Graf 83)

Nueva Chicago 3 (Sanabria 30, Basualdo 89, Tilger 90)
Talleres Cordoba 0

Quilmes 0
Velez Sarsfield 1 (Cubero 79)

Sunday, November 9

Arsenal 3 (Gordillo 27, Romero 38, Gomez 77)
Rosario Central 1 (Belloso 72)

Banfield 0
Atletico Rafaela 0

Colon Santa Fe 1 (Carignano 1)
San Lorenzo 1 (Montillo 23)

Estudiantes 2 (Farias 30, 58)
Lanus 0

Olimpo 0
Gimnasia LP 1 (Herner 81)

River Plate 0
Boca Juniors 2 (Battaglia 37, Iarley 52)

Thursday, November 20

Boca Juniors 1 (Iarley 58)
San Lorenzo 0

Friday, November 21

Lanus 3 (Alvarez 14, pen 85, Diaz 54)
Newell's Old Boys 2 (Aguirre 49, Villar 63)

Velez Sarsfield 1 (Bardaro 3)
Arsenal 1 (Esmerado 13)

Saturday, November 22

Atletico Rafaela 1 (Guerra 76)
Nueva Chicago 1 (Tilger 23)

Gimnasia LP 2 (Rueda 5, Gonzalez 70)
Colon Santa Fe 0

Racing Club 1 (Rimoldi 38)
Independiente 1 (Manso 32)

Talleres Cordoba 2 (Carrizo pen 19, Avendano pen 69)
Estudiantes 1 (Farias 52)

Sunday, November 23

Boca Juniors 0
Quilmes 0

Chacarita Juniors 1 (Lux og 2)
River Plate 0

Rosario Central 2 (Carbonari pen 61, Campora 71)
Olimpo 2 (Mena pen 13, Paez 82)

San Lorenzo 1 (Gimenez og 69)
Banfield 0

Tuesday, November 25

Independiente 0
Lanus 0

Wednesday, November 26

Banfield 2 (Sanguinetti 21, Bilos 85)
Nueva Chicago 0

Colon Santa Fe 2 (Miglionico 29, Carignano 60)
Rosario Central 2 (Campora 39, 85)

Newell's Old Boys 4 (Vasquez 56, 74, 82, Rosales 65)
Talleres Cordoba 3 (Osorio 4, 47, Lazaro 53)

Quilmes 0
Chacarita Juniors 0

San Lorenzo 0
Gimnasia LP 1 (Choy 90)

Thursday, November 27

Arsenal 1 (Gomez 77)
Boca Juniors 2 (Colautti 24, Donnet 64)

Olimpo 1 (Clementz 89)
Velez Sarsfield 0

Friday, November 28

Talleres Cordoba 2 (Piriz Alvez 46, De Bruno 55)
Independiente 0

Saturday, November 29

Gimnasia LP 1 (Choy 75)
Banfield 0

Nueva Chicago 1 (Ramos pen 55)
Estudiantes 2 (Farias pen 42, 68)

Racing Club 1 (Gonzalez 33)
Quilmes 1 (Alayes 41)

Sunday, November 30

Atletico Rafaela 1 (Di Lorenzo 46)
Newell's Old Boys 1 (Villar 89)

Boca Juniors 1 (Villarreal 48)
Olimpo 1 (Hanuch 39)

Chacarita Juniors 0
Arsenal 0

Lanus 2 (Andrizzi 19, Coria 66)
River Plate 0

Rosario Central 0
San Lorenzo 2 (Acosta 74, Michelini 84)

Velez Sarsfield 1 (Bardaro 50)
Colon Santa Fe 1 (Fuertes 63)

ARGENTINA – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Boca Juniors	18	11	6	1	30	9	39
San Lorenzo	18	10	3	5	22	12	33
Newell's OB	17	7	7	3	24	15	28
Banfield	17	8	4	5	23	15	28
Quilmes	17	7	6	4	18	12	27
Rosario Central	17	7	6	4	24	23	27
Arsenal	17	5	7	5	17	16	22
Lanus	17	4	10	3	20	20	22
Talleres Cordoba	17	6	4	7	26	29	22
Racing Club	16	4	9	3	21	18	21
Velez Sarsfield	17	5	6	6	17	22	21
Chacarita Jnrs*	17	5	8	4	18	15	20
Colon Santa Fe	17	4	8	5	19	21	20
Gimnasia LP	17	5	5	7	11	18	20
Estudiantes	16	5	4	7	13	16	19
River Plate	16	5	4	7	17	21	19
Independiente	17	3	7	7	12	18	16
Atletico Rafaela	16	3	7	6	17	24	16
Olimpo	17	3	5	9	13	22	14
Nueva Chicago	17	2	4	11	13	29	10

**3pts deducted for crowd violence*

LEADING GOALSCORERS

9	Alberto Acosta (San Lorenzo)
9	Fernando Cavenaghi (River Plate)
9	Ernesto Farias (Estudiantes)
8	Jorge Cervera (Banfield)
8	Carlos Tevez (Boca Juniors)
8	Julian Vasquez (Newell's Old Boys)

BOLIVIA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Play-offs

Nov 3: Iberoamericana 1 Real Potosi 2.
Nov 5: Aurora 0 Iberoamericana 0; Bolivar 5 Oriente 0.
Nov 6: Blooming 1 Jorge Wilstermann 3; The Strongest 2 Real Potosi 0.
Nov 22: Iberoamericana 1 The Strongest 2.
Nov 23: Aurora 1 Real Potosi 0; Bolivar 9 Blooming 0; Oriente 4 Jorge Wilstermann 2.
Nov 26: Real Potosi 1 Iberoamericana 0; Blooming 1 Oriente 3; The Strongest 2 Aurora 0.
Nov 27: Jorge Wilstermann 3 Bolivar 2.
Nov 30: Iberoamericana 3 Aurora 0; Oriente 2 Bolivar 2; Real Potosi 2 The Strongest 0; Jorge Wilstermann 2 Blooming 0.

PLAY-OFFS – GROUP 1 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
J Wilstermann	6	4	0	2	13	11	12
Bolivar	6	3	1	2	22	9	10
Oriente	6	2	1	3	10	13	7
Blooming	6	2	0	4	6	18	6

PLAY-OFFS – GROUP 2 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
The Strongest	6	3	1	2	6	4	10
Aurora	6	3	1	2	4	6	10
Real Potosi	6	3	0	3	6	6	9
Iberoamericana	6	1	2	3	5	5	5

Top two from each group qualify for semi-finals

BRAZIL

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Nov 5: Parana 1 Figueirense 1; Paysandu 1 Vasco da Gama 2; Juventude 3 Criciuma 1; Internacional 1 Fortaleza 1; Cruzeiro 3 Gremio 0; Coritiba 1 Corinthians 0; Santos 3 Vitoria 1; Sao Paulo 1 Fluminense 0.
Nov 6: Guarani 0 Sao Caetano 1; Bahia 1 Ponte Preta 0; Goias 4 Atletico Paranaense 1; Flamengo 3 Atletico Mineiro 2.
Nov 8: Criciuma 1 Parana 2; Gremio 2 Paysandu 0; Fluminense 3 Coritiba 2.
Nov 9: Vitoria 0 Guarani 0; Figueirense 2 Juventude 1; Ponte Preta 3 Santos 4; Fortaleza 4 Flamengo 1; Vasco da Gama 0 Cruzeiro 1; Corinthians 2 Goias 0; Atletico Paranaense 4 Sao Paulo 3; Atletico Mineiro 1 Internacional 2; Sao Caetano 4 Bahia 1.
Nov 22: Gremio 4 Vasco da Gama 3; Flamengo 1 Criciuma 0; Coritiba 1 Ponte Preta 1; Figueirense 3 Internacional 2; Atletico Mineiro 2 Fortaleza 0.
Nov 23: Santos 3 Fluminense 1; Sao Paulo 3 Vitoria 1; Parana 1 Cruzeiro 3; Sao Caetano 1 Goias 0; Guarani 0 Corinthians 1; Paysandu 3 Juventude 2; Bahia 0 Atletico Paranaense 2.
Nov 29: Vasco da Gama 1 Figueirense 0; Juventude 1 Atletico Mineiro 0; Fluminense 2 Sao Caetano 1; Internacional 3 Flamengo 1; Atletico Paranaense 3 Guarani 1.
Nov 30: Cruzeiro 2 Paysandu 1; Corinthians 1 Bahia 2; Goias 3 Santos 0; Ponte Preta 1 Sao Paulo 2; Fortaleza 5 Parana 3; Vitoria 1 Coritiba 0; Criciuma 0 Gremio 2.

BRAZIL – NATIONAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cruzeiro	44	29	7	8	90	45	94
Santos	44	25	10	9	90	57	85
Sao Paulo	44	22	11	11	79	63	77
Internacional*	44	20	9	15	58	51	71
Sao Caetano**	44	18	14	12	47	35	71
Coritiba	44	20	9	15	63	56	69
At Mineiro	44	17	15	12	72	60	66
Goias	44	18	11	15	76	57	65
Flamengo	44	17	11	16	62	71	62
Parana	44	17	10	17	82	74	61
At Paranaense	44	17	8	19	63	68	59
Figueirense	44	15	14	15	57	54	59
Guarani	44	16	10	18	62	69	58
Corinthians**	44	15	11	18	60	59	58
Criciuma	44	16	9	19	54	65	57
Vitoria	44	15	11	18	50	61	56
Vasco da Gama	44	13	13	18	54	66	52
Juventude*	44	11	14	19	53	68	50
Fluminense**	44	12	11	21	49	72	49
Paysandu**	44	15	11	18	71	73	48
Fortaleza	44	12	12	20	56	70	48
Gremio	44	12	10	22	49	66	46
Bahia	44	12	10	22	57	82	46
Ponte Preta*/**	44	10	17	17	60	72	46

**Ponte Preta have been docked the 4pts gained from the 1-1 draw with Internacional and the 1-0 win over Juventude for fielding an ineligible player in each game; Internacional were awarded two extra points (ie the equivalent of a win), and Juventude received three points.*
***Paysandu have been docked the 8pts gained from the 2-2 draw with Corinthians, the 3-2 win over Ponte Preta, the 1-0 win over Sao Caetano and the 1-1 draw with Fluminense for fielding ineligible players in each game; Corinthians and Fluminense were awarded two extra points (ie the equivalent of a win), and Ponte Preta and Sao Caetano received three points.*
In both cases the won-drawn-lost and goals records were not altered.

CHILE

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

First stage

Nov 7: Puerto Montt 0 Universidad Catolica 2.
Nov 8: Coquimbo Unido 2 U de Chile 3; Santiago Wanderers 4 Palestino 2.
Nov 9: Cobreloa 2 U de Concepcion 0; Colo Colo 4 Cobresal 1; Huachipato 2 Audax Italiano 1; Dep Temuco 1 Union Espanola 2; Rangers 3 San Felipe 1.

CHILE – CLOSING – GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
U de Chile	15	7	2	6	28	21	23
Cobreloa	15	6	4	5	30	24	22
Huachipato	15	6	2	7	30	33	20
Dep Temuco	15	3	1	11	18	38	10

GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Colo Colo	15	9	5	1	39	19	32
Sant Wanderers	15	7	6	2	27	22	27
Palestino	15	8	2	5	35	28	26
Audax Italiano	15	5	2	8	15	22	17

GROUP C – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Union Espanola	15	9	4	2	36	22	31
U Catolica	15	6	2	7	22	24	20
Puerto Montt	15	5	0	10	23	34	15
Coquimbo Unido	15	2	3	10	15	27	9

GROUP D – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
U de Concepcion	15	9	5	1	35	15	32
Cobresal	15	6	4	5	29	26	22
Rangers	15	6	1	8	20	36	19
San Felipe*	15	3	3	9	22	33	9

Top two from each group qualified for play-offs, plus the three third-placed sides with most points. The other third-placed side met the fourth-placed side with most points in a qualifying play-off for the final knockout stage berth.
**3pts deducted for not paying players on time in September*

Qualifying play-off

Nov 20: Puerto Montt 1 Audax Italiano 1
Audax Italiano qualified on better season record.

Play-offs

Best of two legs; aggregate score irrelevant. If level at one game each, 2nd leg went to extra-time – team scoring golden goal qualified

1st rnd, 1st legs
Nov 21: Rangers 2 U de Concepcion 2.
Nov 22: Cobreloa 3 U de Chile 2.
Nov 23: Audax Italiano 1 Colo Colo 1; Huachipato 1 Union Espanola 2; U Catolica 4 Santiago Wanderers 1 (abandoned in 85th minute due to crowd trouble; result stood); Cobresal 0 Palestino 0.

1st rnd, 2nd legs
Nov 28: Union Espanola 3 Huachipato 2.
Nov 29: Palestino 1 Cobresal 2 (aet; Cobresal on golden goal); Colo Colo 4 Audax Italiano 0.
Nov 30: U de Chile 1 Cobreloa 3; U de Concepcion 3 Rangers 1.
Dec 1: Santiago Wanderers 2 U Catolica 1 (aet; no golden goal scored – U Catolica 4-2 on pens).

Palestino and Santiago Wanderers also qualify for quarter-finals as best losers

COLOMBIA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Play-offs

Nov 9: Millonarios 1 Magdalena 0; Dep Pasto 0 Dep Cali 1; At Junior 3 Indep Medellin 2; At Nacional 1 Tolima 2.
Nov 22/23: Dep Cali 1 Millonarios 1; Indep Medellin 1 At Nacional 2; Tolima 1 At Junior 1; Magdalena 1 Dep Pasto 0.
Nov 26/27: Magdalena 0 Dep Cali 0; Millonarios 1 Dep Pasto 0; Tolima 1 Indep Medellin 0; At Nacional 1 At Junior 0.
Nov 29/30: Dep Pasto 1 Millonarios 3; Dep Cali 2 Magdalena 2; At Junior 1 At Nacional 0; Indep Medellin 2 Tolima 0.

PLAY-OFFS – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Millonarios	4	3	1	0	6	2	10
Dep Cali	4	1	3	0	4	3	6
Magdalena	4	1	2	1	3	3	5
Dep Pasto	4	0	0	4	1	6	0

PLAY-OFFS – GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
At Junior	4	2	1	1	5	4	7
Tolima	4	2	1	1	4	4	7
At Nacional	4	2	0	2	4	4	6
Indep Medellin	4	1	0	3	5	6	3

ECUADOR

OVERALL CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY-OFFS

Nov 23: Dep Cuenca 1 El Nacional 2; LDU Quito 2 Emelec 0; Barcelona 3 Dep Quito 0.
Nov 30: El Nacional 2 Dep Cuenca 3; Dep Quito 1 Barcelona 0; Emelec 4 LDU Quito 1.

OVERALL CHAMP'SHIP PLAY-OFFS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
LDU Quito	6	5	0	1	12	7	20 [5]
Barcelona	6	3	0	3	8	6	14 [5]
El Nacional	6	3	0	3	11	9	11 [2]
Emelec	6	3	1	2	9	9	10
Dep Cuenca	6	2	1	3	10	10	7
Dep Quito	6	1	0	5	4	13	3

Bonus points from opening and closing championships in brackets

PERU

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Championship cancelled when no resolution could be found to a player strike over unpaid wages. Matches shown below may be annulled since the clubs fielded youth and amateur players only

Nov 9: Estudiantes 1 Melgar 3; Universitario 1 Dep Wanka 2; Union Huaral 2 Coronel Bolognesi 1.
Nov 14: Sport Boys 1 Alianza Atletico 0.
Nov 22: Dep Wanka 0 Cienciano 1; Alianza Lima 7 Estudiantes 1; Sporting Cristal 4 Universitario 0.
Nov 23: Alianza Atletico 5 At Universidad 3; Melgar 0 Union Huaral 0.

PERU – CLOSING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Alianza Lima	16	11	4	1	36	10	37
Alianza Atletico	17	9	5	3	30	17	32
Sporting Cristal	16	8	6	2	33	18	30
Sport Boys	16	9	3	4	28	17	30
Melgar	17	8	2	7	29	23	26
Coronel Bolognesi	16	8	1	7	25	20	25
Union Huaral	17	7	4	6	14	18	25
Cienciano	15	5	3	7	18	20	18
Dep Wanka	17	4	4	9	13	26	16
At Universidad	15	4	3	8	13	23	15
Universitario	17	3	4	10	13	27	13
Estudiantes	17	1	3	13	12	45	6

URUGUAY

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Nov 7: Fenix 1 Liverpool 0.
Nov 8: Miramar Misiones 3 Villa Espanola 2; Cerro 1 River Plate 0; Central Espanol 0 Bella Vista M 1.
Nov 9: Defensor 4 Wanderers 2; Juventud 2 Plaza 3; Dep Colonia 2 Dep Maldonado 0; Danubio 0 Tacuarembo 4; Penarol 3 Nacional 1.
Nov 22: Dep Maldonado 3 Nacional 0.
Nov 23: Penarol 5 Dep Colonia 2; Central Espanol 1 Miramar Misiones 0; Tacuarembo 0 Fenix 1; Danubio 2 River Plate 0; Juventud 2 Liverpool 5; Wanderers 1 Cerro 1; Defensor 1 Bella Vista M 1; Villa Espanola 0 Plaza 0.
Nov 26: Juventud 1 Wanderers 1; Dep Colonia 5 Villa Espanola 1; Plaza 0 Dep Maldonado 0; Nacional 3 Danubio 0.
Nov 27: River Plate 0 Penarol 1; Cerro 2 Tacuarembo 2; Bella Vista M 2 Fenix 0; Miramar Misiones 1 Defensor 3; Liverpool 2 Central Espanol 1.
Nov 29: Villa Espanola 0 Nacional 0; Danubio 1 Plaza Colonia 0.
Nov 30: Fenix 2 Wanderers 2; Juventud 2 Dep Colonia 2; Tacuarembo 2 Bella Vista M 3; River Plate 2 Central Espanol 1; Liverpool 1 Cerro 0; Miramar Misiones 1 Penarol 3; Defensor 1 Dep Maldonado 0.

URUGUAY – CLOSING – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Penarol	17	12	3	2	30	13	39
Liverpool	17	9	4	4	23	15	31
Fenix	17	8	5	4	21	16	29
Defensor	17	8	4	5	30	20	28
Miramar Misiones	17	8	4	5	26	21	28
Cerro	17	7	6	4	22	17	27
River Plate	17	8	3	6	26	25	27
Danubio	17	7	6	4	21	21	27
Nacional	17	7	5	5	29	23	26
Bella Vista M	17	7	5	5	23	22	26
Dep Maldonado	17	6	5	6	16	14	23
Dep Colonia	17	6	5	6	24	23	23
Central Espanol	17	7	1	9	17	20	22
Wanderers	17	4	7	6	19	24	19
Tacuarembo	17	4	5	8	19	23	17
Plaza	17	2	5	10	16	30	11
Villa Espanola	17	1	5	11	14	29	8
Juventud	17	2	2	13	17	37	8

VENEZUELA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Nov 23: Ital-Chacao 1 Mineros Guayana 0; Carabobo 2 Estudiantes 1; Maracaibo 0 Caracas 0; El Vigia 0 Trujillanos 1; Monagas 0 Dep Tachira 1.
Nov 26: Dep Tachira 0 Ital-Chacao 0; Trujillanos 2 Monagas 2; Caracas 3 El Vigia 0; Estudiantes 0 Maracaibo 1; Mineros Guayana 2 Carabobo 1.
Nov 30: Ital-Chacao 1 Carabobo 0; Maracaibo 0 Mineros Guayana 1; El Vigia 1 Estudiantes 2; Monagas 0 Caracas 2; Dep Tachira 3 Trujillanos 2.

VENEZUELA – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dep Tachira	15	9	6	0	24	12	33
Caracas	15	8	6	1	29	13	30
Mineros Guayana	15	9	2	4	17	12	29
Ital-Chacao	15	6	4	5	21	19	22
Maracaibo	15	4	5	6	10	11	17
El Vigia	15	3	7	5	16	19	16
Estudiantes	15	4	3	8	11	20	15
Carabobo	15	3	5	7	19	24	14
Trujillanos	15	3	4	8	12	18	13
Monagas	15	3	4	8	12	23	13

CENTRAL & NORTH AMERICA

MEXICO

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Nov 8: Jaguares 0 Pachuca 2; Veracruz 3 Pumas UNAM 4; Monterrey 0 Necaxa 0; San Luis 0 Tigres 2; Atlas 2 Toluca 0.
Nov 9: America 1 Guadalajara 2; Atlante 2 Morelia 2; Irapuato 1 Cruz Azul 2; Santos 2 Gallos Blancos 1; Tecos UAG 2 Puebla 1.
Nov 11: Toluca 5 San Luis 0.
Nov 13: Puebla 1 Monterrey 0.
Nov 15: Cruz Azul 2 Veracruz 3; Morelia 1 Jaguares 1; Tigres 1 Santos 1; Guadalajara 1 Atlas 0; Necaxa 1 America 0.
Nov 16: Irapuato 0 Pachuca 1; Pumas UNAM 2 Tecos UAG 2; Gallos Blancos 0 Atlante 2.
Nov 22: Veracruz 1 Irapuato 0; Tecos UAG 2 Cruz Azul 5; Atlante 2 Tigres 2; San Luis 1 Guadalajara 2; Pachuca 2 Morelia 1; Jaguares 0 Gallos Blancos 0; Santos 3 Toluca 2; Atlas 1 Necaxa 1; Monterrey 0 Pumas UNAM 1; America 4 Puebla 1.

MEXICO – OPENING – GROUP 1 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Pachuca	19	10	6	3	28	19	36
Toluca	19	8	3	8	33	24	27
Monterrey	19	5	7	7	29	29	22
Puebla	19	5	5	9	23	30	20
Atlas	19	5	4	10	29	32	19

GROUP 2 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Pumas UNAM	19	11	5	3	34	23	38
Santos	19	8	7	4	41	29	31
Tecos UAG	19	9	4	6	31	29	31
America	19	8	4	7	34	26	28
Gallos Blancos	19	1	4	14	16	44	7

GROUP 3 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tigres	19	11	5	3	38	20	38
Cruz Azul	19	7	6	6	30	30	27
Morelia	19	7	4	8	25	29	25
Jaguares	19	5	6	8	21	34	21
San Luis	19	2	5	12	20	39	11

GROUP 4 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Atlante	19	8	7	4	32	21	31
Necaxa	19	7	9	3	23	18	30
Guadalajara	19	9	2	8	30	28	29
Veracruz	19	8	3	8	34	38	27
Irapuato	19	6	4	9	23	32	22

Group winners and the two runners-up with most points qualified automatically for the quarter-finals; the other two runners-up and the two third-placed sides with most points went into the qualifying play-offs to decide the last two quarter-final entrants

TOP GOALSCORERS
15 Luis Gabriel Rey (Atlante)
13 Jose Cardozo (Toluca)
12 Emilio Mora (Veracruz)
12 Carlos Maria Morales (Atlas)

Qualifying play-offs

1st legs
Nov 26: Toluca 4 Guadalajara 0; Cruz Azul 1 Tecos UAG 0.

2nd legs
Nov 29: Guadalajara 4 Toluca 2 *Toluca 6-4 on agg*; Tecos UAG 1 Cruz Azul 3 *Cruz Azul 4-1 on agg.*

UNITED STATES

CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY-OFFS

Quarter-finals

2nd legs
Nov 8: Kansas City Wizards 2 Colorado Rapids 0 *Kansas City 3-1 on agg.*
Nov 9: Chicago Fire 2 DC United 0 *Chicago 4-0 on agg*; New England Revolution 1 MetroStars 1 *New England 3-1 on agg*; San Jose Earthquakes 5 Los Angeles Galaxy 2 (aet) *San Jose 5-4 on agg.*

Semi-finals

Nov 14: Chicago Fire 1 New England Revolution 0 (aet).
Nov 15: San Jose Earthquakes 3 Kansas City Wizards 2 (aet).

Final (MLS Cup)

Nov 23 - Home Depot Center stadium, Carson
San Jose Earthquakes 4 (Ekelund 5, Donovan 38, 71, Mulrooney 50)
Chicago Fire 2 (Beasley 49, Roner og 54)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 27,000. **Ref:** Hall

AFRICA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Semi-finals, 2nd legs

November 8

Enyimba (Nig) 2 (Tarik og 44, Ochei 90)
USM Alger (Alg) 1 (Billel 4)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Quartey (Gha)
Enyimba 3-2 on agg

November 15

Esperance (Tun) 1 (Souayah pen)
Ismaili (Egy) 3 (Fathi, Traore, Abougreisha)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 40,000. **Ref:** Guezzaz (Mor)
Sent off: Mnari (Esperance); Younes (Ismaili)
Ismaili 6-2 on agg

Final, 1st leg

Nov 30 - Aba
Enyimba 2 (Nwanna 28, Anumnu 49)
Ismaili 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Tessema (Eth)
Enyimba: Enyeama - Nwaneri, Orjinta, Omolade, Mohammed, Anumnu, Nwanna, Ochei (Ezenwa 83), Okonkwo, Abubakar, Ogunbiyi.
Ismaili: Eliwa - Fahim, Nahas, Saber, Mahmoud, Abdalla, Soliman, Traore, Salem, El-Satar, El-Gamal (Ibrahim 80).

CUP-WINNERS CUP

Final, 1st leg

Nov 15 - MKO Abiola stadium, Abeokuta
Julius Berger (Nig) 2 (Ezeh 7, Idahor 47)
Etoile Sahel (Tun) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Shelmani (Lby)

CAF CUP

Final, 1st leg

Nov 9 - Mohammed V complexe, Casablanca
Raja Casablanca (Mor) 2 (Bidodan 11, Diallo 72)
Cotonsport (Cam) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 80,000. **Ref:** Ndoye (Sen)
Raja: Chadili - Tajeddine, Kacemi, Bekkari, Abdelouahed, Erbate, Zemmama, Misbah (Elatlassi 83), Musa, Bidodan (Aboucherouane 73), Diallo.
Cotonsport: Kameni - Kibong, Nsangue, Mevengue, Boya, Massoma (Sesay 53), Amadou, Sadjo, Minusu (Endzanga 63), Oumarou, Nassourou (Hamadou 81).

Final, 2nd leg

Nov 23 - Garoua
Cotonsport 0
Raja Casablanca 0
Att: 30,000. **Ref:** El-Beltagy (Egy)
Raja 2-0 on agg
Cotonsport: Kameni - Kibong, Massoma (Sanda 54), Nsangue, Sesay, Hamadou, Endzanga (Minisu 53), Boya, Sadjo (Gambo 75), Mevengue, Amadou.
Raja: Chadili - Tajeddine, Kacemi, Erbate, Bekkari, Misbah (Bazdaoui 68), Musa, Masloub, Zemmama, Bidodan, Diallo.

ANGOLA

ANGOLA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AS Aviacao	26	15	8	3	38	13	53
Petro Atletico	26	16	4	6	41	17	52
Petro Huambo	26	14	4	8	34	23	46
1º de Agosto	26	11	9	6	39	29	42
Sonangol Namibe	26	11	5	10	23	17	38
Academica Lobito	26	9	10	7	19	23	37
Inter Clube	26	9	7	10	28	24	34
Progresso S'zanga	26	7	13	6	20	20	34
Sporting Clube	26	6	13	7	27	32	31
1º de Maio	26	8	7	11	19	35	31
Sagrada Esp	26	8	5	13	25	24	29
Benfica Luanda	26	7	7	12	26	36	28
Militar Huila	26	6	9	11	18	29	27
Ritondo SC	26	1	7	18	12	47	10

CAMEROON

CAMEROON – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cotonsport	30	18	8	4	46	19	62
Canon Yaounde	30	15	6	9	40	25	51
PWD Bamenda	30	14	9	7	21	15	51
Bamboutos	30	14	8	8	31	19	50
Mount Cameroon	30	14	7	9	27	22	49
Unisport Bafang	30	12	9	9	28	28	45
Fovu Baham	30	12	7	11	32	30	43
Union Douala	30	11	9	10	40	32	42
Victoria Utd	30	9	11	10	27	25	38
Cintra Yaounde	30	10	7	13	23	37	37
Tonnerre Yaounde	30	8	11	11	27	35	35
Renaissance	30	8	10	12	28	34	34
Racing Baf'ssam	30	6	15	9	26	26	33
Sable Batie	30	7	11	12	24	31	32
Caiman Douala	30	8	4	18	31	48	28
Stade Bandjoun	30	4	8	18	13	38	20

IVORY COAST

CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY-OFFS

IVORY COAST – PLAY-OFFS – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
ASEC Abidjan	10	6	3	1	19	8	21
Africa Sports	10	5	4	1	11	6	19
Stella Club	10	4	3	3	15	9	15
Stade Abidjan	10	4	3	3	14	9	15
Sabe Sports	10	2	3	5	10	20	9
Satellite FC	10	0	2	8	7	24	2

NIGERIA

NIGERIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Enyimba	34	19	6	9	39	19	63
Julius Berger	34	17	7	10	43	26	58
Enugu Rangers	34	18	4	12	37	28	58
Plateau Utd	34	16	6	12	28	27	54
Iwuanyanwu Nat	34	16	5	13	39	29	53
Gabros Intl	34	16	5	13	35	33	53
Wikki Tourists	34	15	4	15	32	35	49
Bendel Insurance	34	14	6	14	33	32	48
Niger Tornadoes	34	14	5	15	31	29	47
Gombe Utd	34	13	8	13	33	35	47
Kano Pillars	34	14	5	15	31	35	47
Lobi Stars	34	15	2	17	32	40	47
Kwara Utd	34	14	4	16	32	36	46
Dolphins	34	13	6	15	36	32	45
Sharks Port H'c't	34	12	8	14	35	40	44
Delta Utd	34	12	6	16	30	36	42
Jigawa GS	34	11	3	20	20	34	36
Sunshine Stars	34	7	10	17	20	40	31

ASIA

CHINA

CHINA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shanghai S'hua	28	17	4	7	56	33	55
Inter Shanghai	28	16	6	6	39	26	54
Dalian	28	15	8	5	44	22	53
Shenzhen	28	12	11	5	42	21	47
Shenyang	28	11	10	7	35	31	43
Liaoning	28	11	8	9	39	34	41
Yunnan	28	11	7	10	30	27	40
Sichuan	28	9	10	9	41	42	37
Beijing HC	28	9	9	10	34	26	36
Tianjin	28	8	12	8	32	33	36
Qingdao	28	10	5	13	40	50	35
Shandong	28	8	9	11	42	46	33
Chongqing	28	6	8	14	21	34	26
Army August 1st	28	6	4	18	23	59	22
Shaanxi	28	3	5	20	28	62	14

JAPAN

SECOND STAGE

Nov 8: Kashima Antlers 2 Gamba Osaka 2; Urawa Reds 5 Tokyo Verdy 1969 1; Kashiwa Reysol 2 Shimizu S-Pulse 3; Jubilo Iwata 1 Vegalta Sendai 0; Kyoto Purple Sanga 3 JEF United Ichihara 2; Cerezo Osaka 2 Oita Trinita 0.
Nov 9: FC Tokyo 4 Vissel Kobe 1; Nagoya Grampus Eight 3 Yokohama F Marinos 2.
Nov 15: JEF United Ichihara 1 Cerezo Osaka 0; Yokohama F Marinos 1 Kashima Antlers 2; Shimizu S-Pulse 1 Urawa Reds 0; Gamba Osaka 1 FC Tokyo 0; Vissel Kobe 2 Kashiwa Reysol 2; Oita Trinita 0 Nagoya Grampus Eight 0.
Nov 16: Vegalta Sendai 3 Kyoto Purple Sanga 1; Tokyo Verdy 1969 1 Jubilo Iwata 2.
Nov 22: Vegalta Sendai 0 Yokohama F Marinos 4; Jubilo Iwata 2 Gamba Osaka 1; Nagoya Grampus Eight 4 Urawa Reds 1; FC Tokyo 1 Tokyo Verdy 1969 1; Kyoto Purple Sanga 0 Vissel Kobe 2.
Nov 23: Kashima Antlers 2 Kashiwa Reysol 1; JEF United Ichihara 1 Oita Trinita 1.
Nov 24: Cerezo Osaka 5 Shimizu S-Pulse 1.
Nov 29: Urawa Reds 2 Kashima Antlers 2; Kashiwa Reysol 2 FC Tokyo 4; Tokyo Verdy 1969 0 JEF United Ichihara 2; Yokohama F Marinos 2 Jubilo Iwata 1; Shimizu S-Pulse 2 Nagoya Grampus Eight 1; Gamba Osaka 5 Kyoto Purple Sanga 1; Vissel Kobe 0 Cerezo Osaka 4; Oita Trinita 1 Vegalta Sendai 1.

The World Next Month

The most important games over the next four weeks

Sun, December 14
Boca Juniors v Milan (Yokohama, World Club Cup)

Fri, December 26
United Arab Emirates v Saudi Arabia (Kuwait City, Gulf Cup)
Kuwait v Oman (Kuwait City, Gulf Cup)

Sat, December 27
Bahrain v Qatar (Kuwait City, Gulf Cup)

Sun, December 28
Yemen v Oman (Kuwait City, Gulf Cup)

Mon, December 29
Kuwait v United Arab Emirates (Kuwait City, Gulf Cup)
Saudi Arabia v Qatar (Kuwait City, Gulf Cup)

Tue, December 30
Bahrain v Yemen (Kuwait City, Gulf Cup)

Wed, December 31
Oman v United Arab Emirates (Kuwait City, Gulf Cup)

Thu, January 1
Kuwait v Yemen (Kuwait City, Gulf Cup)
Bahrain v Saudi Arabia (Kuwait City, Gulf Cup)

Sat, January 3
United Arab Emirates v Qatar (Kuwait City, Gulf Cup)
Oman v Bahrain (Kuwait City, Gulf Cup)

Sun, January 4
Kuwait v Saudi Arabia (Kuwait City, Gulf Cup)

Mon, January 5
Qatar v Yemen (Kuwait City, Gulf Cup)

Tue, January 6
Oman v Saudi Arabia (Kuwait City, Gulf Cup)

Wed, January 7
United Arab Emirates v Bahrain (Kuwait City, Gulf Cup)

Thu, January 8
Yemen v Saudi Arabia (Kuwait City, Gulf Cup)
Kuwait v Qatar (Kuwait City, Gulf Cup)

Sat, January 10
Kuwait v Bahrain (Kuwait City, Gulf Cup)

Sun, January 11
Yemen v United Arab Emirates (Kuwait City, Gulf Cup)
Oman v Qatar (Kuwait City, Gulf Cup)

JAPAN – 2ND STAGE – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Yokohama FM	15	7	5	3	27	17	26
JEF United	15	7	5	3	24	18	26
Jubilo Iwata	15	7	5	3	22	17	26
Kashima Antlers	15	6	7	2	21	19	25
FC Tokyo	15	6	6	3	32	20	24
Urawa Reds	15	6	5	4	29	19	23
Gamba Osaka	15	6	5	4	24	17	23
Grampus Eight	15	6	4	5	30	26	22
Tokyo Verdy	15	5	6	4	28	25	21
Shimizu S-Pulse	15	6	3	6	19	26	21
Kashiwa Reysol	15	3	7	5	16	20	16
Cerezo Osaka	15	4	3	8	26	27	15
Vissel Kobe	15	3	5	7	17	29	14
Kyoto PS	15	3	4	8	14	26	13
Vegalta Sendai	15	2	6	7	14	28	12
Oita Trinita	15	1	8	6	7	16	11

Marinos are overall championship winners having taken both the First and Second Stages

SOUTH KOREA

Nov 9: Anyang 1 Chunnam 0; Busan 4 Chonbuk 4; Ulsan 1 Pohang 2; Daejeon 1 Bucheon 0; Suwon 1 Gwangju 0; Daegu 3 Songnam 3.
Nov 12: Songnam 2 Suwon 4; Gwangju 1 Daejeon 0; Bucheon 0 Ulsan 1; Pohang 0 Busan 1; Chonbuk 3 Anyang 1; Daegu 1 Chunnam 1.
Nov 16: Chunnam 1 Chonbuk 1; Anyang 1 Pohang 2; Busan 1 Bucheon 0; Ulsan 5 Gwangju 0; Daejeon 3 Songnam 2; Suwon 2 Daegu 1.

SOUTH KOREA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Songnam	44	27	10	7	85	50	91
Ulsan	44	20	13	11	63	44	73
Suwon	44	19	15	10	59	46	72
Chunnam	44	17	20	7	65	48	71
Chonbuk	44	18	15	11	72	58	69
Daejeon	44	18	11	15	50	51	65
Pohang	44	17	13	14	53	46	64
Anyang	44	14	14	16	69	68	56
Busan	44	13	10	21	41	71	49
Gwangju	44	13	7	24	41	60	46
Daegu	44	7	16	21	38	60	37
Bucheon	44	3	12	29	39	73	21

Where are the women?

Please mark your correspondence 'Letters page' and send to:
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Fax: +44 (0) 20 7261 7474
E-mail: worldsoccerletters@ipcmedia.com

DIGEST

Professionalism pays off

I want to complain about the lack of coverage of women's football in *World Soccer*. The recent Women's World Cup was a great success, despite being switched at late notice to the United States. Yet it merited only two pages in your December 2003 edition.

Women's football is exciting to watch and many players, you would be surprised to know, have technique to match a lot of men.

Darryl Smith, California

Gavin Hamilton replies: A simple explanation for the lack of World Cup coverage was that our monthly deadlines prevented us from reporting the tournament in full any earlier. But the Women's World Cup received no less coverage than other FIFA tournaments such as the Under-17 and Under-20 championships.

We have only a finite amount of space in the magazine. If we give more coverage to women's football, something else has to be dropped.

My view – and I am open to persuasion otherwise – is that the women's game is vastly different to men's football, in terms of pace, professionalism and profile.

Old firm, same problem

I'm writing regarding a comment made by Keir Radnedge in his review of the Champions League matches played between Manchester United and Rangers.

He states: "The class gap between the teams should silence, for a while at any rate, demands from the Old Firm to be admitted to the Premiership."

Excuse me? Certainly, United were different class at Old Trafford, but they were not at Ibrox, so to make a statement like that on the basis of one game is ridiculous.

I seem to remember, only last season, Celtic knocking Liverpool and Blackburn, both Premiership sides, out of Europe without losing a game. Does that suggest both those clubs are not good enough for the SPL?

Incidentally, United's win at Ibrox was the first by an English club over a Scottish team in European competition for 19 years. Hardly a record that would back up such a statement, is it?

Andy Mackay, Luton

FIFA vote is a farce

I must vent my frustrations and point out what a farce the FIFA World Player of the Year award has become.

How can an award of this stature shortlist only one player worthy of winning it. Clearly Thierry Henry is the only worthy recipient of the three players listed. Ronaldo and Zinedine Zidane's personal achievements have not warranted such accolades. Indeed, both players were almost shadows throughout the Champions League (except for the two memorable matches against Manchester United).

What of Pavel Nedved? Here is a player who without doubt should be in at least the top three in the world. He at times was Juventus's sole attacking threat last season. He led them to a European Cup Final (defeating Real Madrid on the way, I might add) and helped them dominate the Italian League (debatably, the best in the world).

This is why the *World Soccer* award always produces better winners than the FIFA World Player of the Year award. Surely Nedved (my pick) will feature highly among your finalists.

Keep up the good objective work!

Miguel Da Ponte, by e-mail

Spain and Italy get it right. Why can't England?

Following the fines imposed on Cristiano Ronaldo and Ryan Giggs for their part in the fracas at the end of the Man Utd-Arsenal game, surely it is time for a reform of the FA's disciplinary set-up.

Spain and Italy have had it right for a long time: if there is any doubt, an immediate hearing is given, almost always before the player's next match. A player sent off is automatically given a one-match ban, any appeal is dealt with in the minimum time.

Surely, if the Spanish and Italian authorities can usually manage this within one week, why does it take the FA two months?

I say two months, but that doesn't take into account the recent banning of Joe Cole for two matches for offences committed back in March, when he was still at West Ham.

Eoin Byrne, Tyrone

Next Month in WORLD SOCCER AFRICAN NATIONS CUP PREVIEW

STAY AHEAD OF THE GAME
FEBRUARY ISSUE ON SALE JANUARY 16

BBC WORLD SERVICE

Tunisia 2004

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GROUP A

24 January 19.30	Tunisia				Rwanda	Rades BBC
25 January 14.00	DR Congo				Guinea	El Menzah
28 January 19.00	Tunisia				DR Congo	Rades
28 January 14.00	Guinea				Rwanda	Bizerte
1 February 14.00	Tunisia				Guinea	Rades
1 February 14.00	DR Congo				Rwanda	Bizerte

GROUP B

26 January 19.00	Burkina Faso				Senegal	El Menzah
26 January 14.00	Kenya				Mali	Bizerte
30 January 14.00	Kenya				Senegal	Bizerte
30 January 19.00	Burkina Faso				Mali	El Menzah
2 February 14.00	Mali				Senegal	El Menzah
2 February 14.00	Burkina Faso				Kenya	Bizerte

GROUP C

25 January 19.00	Algeria				Cameroon	Sousse
25 January 16.30	Zimbabwe				Egypt	Sfax
29 January 16.30	Cameroon				Zimbabwe	Sfax
29 January 19.00	Algeria				Egypt	Sousse
3 February 14.00	Cameroon				Egypt	Monastir
3 February 14.00	Algeria				Zimbabwe	Sousse

GROUP D

27 January 14.00	Nigeria				Morocco	Monastir
27 January 18.00	Benin				South Africa	Sfax
31 January 14.00	Nigeria				South Africa	Monastir
31 January 14.00	Benin				Morocco	Sfax
4 February 18.00	Benin				Nigeria	Sfax
4 February 18.00	Morocco				South Africa	Sousse

QUARTER-FINALS

7 February 19.00	(Winner Group A) (or winner Group B if Tunisia are runner-up A)		25	(Runner-up Group B) (or runner-up Group A if it is Tunisia)	Rades BBC
7 February 14.00	(Winner Group B) (or winner Group A if Tunisia are runner-up A)		26	(Runner-up Group A) (or runner-up Group B if Tunisia are runner-up A)	Bizerte BBC
8 February 14.00	(Winner du groupe C)		27	(2e du groupe D)	Monastir BBC
8 February 17.00	(Winner du groupe D)		28	(2e du groupe C)	Rades BBC

SEMI-FINALS

11 February 19.00	(Winner 25)		29	(Winner 27)	Rades BBC
11 February 19.00	(Winner 26)		30	(Winner 28)	Sousse BBC

THIRD PLACE

13 February 14.00	(Loser 29)			(Loser 30)	Monastir BBC

FINAL

Saturday 14 February | 15.00 | Rades BBC

(Winner 29)			(Winner 30)

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BBC *Indicates match commentary*

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